

fifth revised and enlarged edition 2014

# HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE

AD 1789-2013



B.V. RAO

fifth revised and enlarged edition 2014

HISTORY OF  
**MODERN**  
**EUROPE**

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To the memory of  
my distinguished uncle

**Late Beldona Bhima Rao**

fifth revised and enlarged edition 2014

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## Foreword

Prof BVRao has written *History of Modern Europe* with a specific purpose, mainly to meet the requirements of the undergraduate students studying history in the universities. The period covered in this book is taught practically in every university. It begins with the revolutionary period of European history and ends with the period of post-war recovery of Europe. Prof Rao has briefly discussed most of the focal points of the period under review in simple and lucid language, which is easily understood by the students of this subject. One of the novel features of this book is the list of additional readings suggested by the author at the end of each chapter. This will certainly help the inquisitive students to undertake in-depth studies of the topics of their choice. It is quite obvious from the contents of this book that Prof Rao has taken note of major recent publications on European history, and has made the treatment of his subject quite comprehensive. The maps of Europe from 1789 to the post-World War II period included in this book are very useful for understanding the subject.

I am sure that both the teachers and students would welcome this addition to the existing literature on European History.

**A.R. Kulkarni**

## Preface to the First Edition

*T*he shaping of modern Europe is a historical phenomenon. The forces which brought it about need careful study. The course of events which took place in Europe in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century had its repercussions in Afro-Asian countries, most of which were under colonial rule. Therefore a student of modern history would do well to study this subject.

Although the treatment of the subject in this book may not be very exhaustive, nevertheless an undergraduate student would find it instructive and useful while preparing for the examinations. To enable the students to have a better understanding and grip over the subject I have added some attractive features. I have covered the whole subject (from 1789–1975) by dividing it into thirty convenient units or chapters. Each chapter contains a well thought out explanation of the topic in an interesting, simple and lucid manner. At the end of each chapter I have provided a useful bibliography (Suggested Readings). To an inquiring mind, this will be most gratifying. I have taken pains to include a dozen excellent maps, all drawn to scale, to widen the perception of our students. I am sure that even students who are appearing for competitive examinations would find my book very useful.

I am grateful to Prof F R Mustafa and Sri Jagtap, both working in the Geography Department of Shivaji University, for preparing excellent maps to be included in this book. I am highly obliged to Prof A R Kulkarni (formerly Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi) Head of the Department of History, University of Poona, for writing an encouraging foreword to this book. I am also obliged to my wife, Rakma, for rendering secretarial assistance.

**B.V. Rao**

## Preface to the Fifth Edition

*T*he book needed revision as few chapters required more information, some needed to be updated till 2013, and a few others better treatment. Chapters on The French Revolution of 1789 (chapter 2) and Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte (chapter 3) now contain more information, and the chapters on The European Union (chapter 32) and Post Cold War Era: The Dawning of New Europe (chapter 33) include events up to 2013. There is more information on the Russian Revolution of 1905 (chapter 20). Chapter on Europe Since the Seventies (chapter 31) has received better treatment.

Thus, this revision makes the book up-to-date and comprehensive.

Bengaluru  
14/8/2014

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## The Age of Reason

### Impact of Science on Religion

*I*n the chapter on Renaissance it has been emphasised that in the realm of science great progress was achieved due to the discoveries and inventions. A giant among the scientists was Newton whose law of gravitation "marked the closing of one epoch in the history of human thought and the beginning of another". It was proved that the universe was based on some order and that celestial phenomena occur at regular intervals. Even clocks are set to time based on the precise motion of celestial bodies. The scientific revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had great impact on people's minds. It dispelled religious superstitions and introduced secular thoughts.

One of the important things in society which came to be seriously affected was traditional Christianity. Protestant Reformation followed by Catholic Counter-Reformation, which was in turn followed by religious wars in Europe, all led to the evolution of "natural religion". The natural laws of the universe came to be applied to religion also. It was then that a conflict arose between those who believed in traditional Christianity and the supporters of natural religion. One of the great supporters of natural religion was Baruch Spinoza who said God and universe are one and the same. But the Jews and Christians attacked him for expressing atheistic views. Thus he became the most misunderstood man during the seventeenth century.

### Leibniz

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Apart from Baruch Spinoza, the other person to make an attempt to

reconcile religion with science was Leibniz (1646-1716). He rejected Spinoza's theory and said that substance was the ultimate reality, and it can be perceived only as a force. The universe is made up of many centres of force, that is, monads (or atoms of nature). Leibniz tried to prove the existence of God in terms of scientific formula. He tried "to throw the light of reason on old theological concepts".

## Deism

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A group of rationalists known as Deists came into prominence. They rejected traditional Christianity of mysticism, prayers and rituals. The only thing they liked in Christianity was the ethical teachings of Christ. They believed that God was an impersonal force and He created this universe. Immutable laws operate in this universe. What He expects from people on earth is ethical conduct and human perfection based on reason. One of those who belonged to the Deist group was Voltaire, the famous French philosopher who attacked Christianity for all its "absurdities". Diderot also ridiculed the Christian doctrines. Rousseau belonged to the Deist group but he was not so vehement in his attacks on Christianity as others were. He proposed the establishment of a civil religion. With the support of great rational thinkers like Immanuel Kant, Reimarus (both German), Tom Paine, Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, Deism became something like a revolutionary movement and threatened orthodox Christianity. Thomas Paine (1737-1809), whose influence was felt both in the American and French Revolutions, became the typical representative of the Age of Enlightenment.

## Pietism

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Another remarkable religious development was Pietism. It emerged on account of the sectarian feelings developed among Christians. Their constant bickerings and intolerance gave rise to disgust among intellectuals who believed in pure and simple teachings of Christ. Foremost among its leaders was Philip Spener, a German Lutheran pastor. He urged his fellow Lutheran and Calvinist Protestants to avoid controversies on dogmas and become "practical mystics". In the

eighteenth century, Pietism received its impetus from Emmanuel Swedenborg of Sweden whose mystical works made him extremely popular.

## Quakers

George Fox, an Englishman and a contemporary of Spener, founded a sect called "Quakers" or "Friends". Fox was not an intellectual as others were. However, he was self-educated, self-opinionated and a sincere Pietist. He despised outward form of orthodox Christianity and insisted upon inward spiritual experience with simple living and high thinking. He preached his principles in England, Scotland and America. He detested wars and urged his followers to depend on the guidance of the "inner light". Although the sect did not become popular, it counted among its votaries great men like William Penn and other radical Protestants of the time.

One of the great names among the followers of Pietism is Wesley. He founded a "Club" called "Holy Club" in Oxford University in 1729 which consisted mostly of his college mates. The members of this club avoided gay and easy-going life and developed spiritual fervour and piety. They came to be known as Methodists because they scrupulously followed certain principles in life. Wesley made Methodist movement extremely popular by his lectures and sermons which he delivered during his travels. He had the most fruitful preaching career spanning over fifty years during which he delivered about 40,000 sermons. According to him anyone could be a Christian if he lived according to the Christian principles, and accepted Christ as his saviour.

## Jansenist Movement

Turning towards the Catholic church, one perceives a progressive movement or a Pietist movement growing within. It was led by Cornelius Jansen, a bishop living in the Spanish Netherlands. He believed not only in the outward forms of Catholic religion but urged his followers to experience a “conversion”—a path leading to spiritual perfection and holiness. His disciples in France made Port-Royal near Paris a centre of Jansenist movement, and one of the great supporters of this movement was Blaise Pascal, the most celebrated mathematician. Jansenist movement received a setback when King Louis XIV, urged by Jesuits, declared it as heretical. Though it was cut off from the Catholic Church (on account of Pope’s bull), it has survived to this day in Dutch Netherlands.

## Pietism in Russian Orthodox Church

Pietism appeared even in the Russian Eastern Orthodox Church in the middle of the seventeenth century. It appeared once again in the eighteenth century with some dissenting peasants forming a sect called Doukhobors. The Doukhobors believed in “inner light” like the Quakers to guide them. They regarded military service as unchristian.

## Atheism

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While Pietism and Deism may be regarded as the first and second development respectively, towards the path of enlightenment (or Age of Reason), there was one more in the offing. It was Atheism. Atheism got its support from the French encyclopaedists. Foremost among them was Holbach (a German by birth). His home was visited by noted intellectuals of the time. In two of his noted works, Christianity Unveiled and System of Nature, published in 1767 and 1770 respectively, he repudiated the existence of God and attacked Christianity for being the root cause of all evils. Holbach’s writings took many Pietists and Deists by surprise. Catholics and Protestants felt outraged. They attempted to refute Holbach’s thesis. The rise of Free Masonry in England and other European countries was one more religious development which took place in the eighteenth century.

## Religious Tolerance

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One of the most important results of the “novel religious developments” of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the spread of religious tolerance in many parts of Europe. The Pietists made it clear that religion was a matter concerned with inner feelings of individuals and individual conscience. External observance was not enough and had no meaning. The Deists emphasised that religion as existing was all superstitious and ritualistic and therefore the real religion was natural religion which they envisaged. In view of these circumstances it was hoped that politicians, statesmen and rulers would take note of these and evolve religious policies in tune with the time.

During the second half of eighteenth century Europe witnessed a kind of religious liberalism. Anti-Catholic laws were not strictly enforced. Similarly in France, anti-Protestant laws remained dormant. Charles III of Spain restrained inquisition and extended religious tolerance. Pope Benedict XIV also did not press for the trial and punishment of heretics. Being an intellectual and liberal he was praised by no less a person than Voltaire, the French philosopher. The Jesuits who had whipped up Catholic fanaticism in many countries of Europe invited the wrath of many rulers, including the Pope. The king of Portugal expelled the Jesuits from Portuguese dominions and the same policy was followed by the Spanish and French kings.

The most distinguished rulers of Europe in the eighteenth century, namely, Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine the Great of Russia and Joseph II of Austria practised religious tolerance. Frederick the Great was prepared to extend religious tolerance as a state policy. Similarly, Catherine the Great extended religious tolerance even to the Muslims and Jesuits and allowed them to settle in a corner of her empire. She conformed, herself to the precepts of the Orthodox Church but detested its clergy. The property of the church was secularised. Joseph II of Austria became a great champion of religious tolerance. His Austrian Empire comprised polyglots, people belonging to various races and creeds. In an attempt to bring about a proper cohesion and solidarity in his Empire he was prepared to tolerate all creeds—even the Jews and Moslems.

## Emancipation of Jews

In this age of reason and religious liberalism Europe witnessed the emancipation of Jews. They were found wandering all over Europe and many governments were not prepared to give them shelter. In some states they were allowed to settle on the condition that they would not have any rights. Thus Jews were ill-treated (Christians had not forgotten about what they did to Jesus Christ and the Gentiles) and they were segregated from the rest of the population. Under these conditions the Jews pined for their promised land. In the eighteenth century the Jews came under the influence of Moses Mendelssohn, a German Jewish philosopher and scientist. He advised the Jews to avoid seclusion and segregation and mingle freely with the rest of the people. He pleaded for reforms in education and enjoyment of full civil rights by Jews. Their emancipation began in Prussia under Frederick the Great who was out to prove that he was the most enlightened despot. His policy of religious tolerance was followed by others. Joseph II advised Christians to treat Jews "in a friendly manner".

## Impact of Social Science

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While attitudes of enlightened rulers towards religion and religious practices were undergoing gradual change in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there developed a growing concern about man's place and function in society. As natural religion made progress, similarly a rationalist study of man also made some advances. This study attained the status of a science and was called Social Science. Critical study of man, which was devoid of religious influence, was undertaken.

## History

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### Giovanni-Battista-Vico (1668-1744)

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, history—the study of man's past—entered a crucial phase of development. For the first time attention was paid to the development of critical historical scholarship which was totally objective and natural in spirit and devoid of religious

influence or what was known as 'miracles'. Foremost among the historians who developed this kind of scholarship was Vico, an Italian professor. He subjected the sources of ancient Greek and Roman history to severe tests and proved that some of them were 'unreliable'. Changes in political institutions and works of art were the outcome of changes in the circumstances and environment of a country, he said. But more important was when he declared "Each society carried within it seeds of dissolution". Montesquieu was very much influenced by the writings of Vico and some of them were adopted in his *Spirit of the Laws*. The concept of social progress became an essential element in the writings of Vico whose prominent work was *The Story of Civilisation*. [Science Nuova, or New Science, 1725]

### **Helvetius (1715-71)**

Helvetius was another French rationalist who laid emphasis on the possibility and desirability of social progress in human society. He pleaded for equal rights and opportunities for all men so that there could be a better society.

### **Marquis de Condorcet (1743-94)**

The idea of social progress found a great champion in Marquis de Condorcet, a French philosopher, mathematician and free thinker (1743-94). He declared that the human race was advancing rapidly towards perfection. He divided history of mankind into several periods and showed how in each period progress was achieved. He outlined the need for popular education as that would act as an instrument by which progress could be achieved.

## **Scientific Materialism**

In tune with the development of physical and mathematical sciences of the day, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) tried to develop a model or system by which human actions in society could be explained in the manner natural phenomenon was explained by scientists. In other words, he wanted to build such a science which would explain human nature after observing and analysing processes of human thoughts. Hobbes believed

that man, like the universe, was like a machine and functioned like a machine—he called it matter in motion. Man's sense organs come into contact with this motion which leads to "certain sensations". Knowledge is derived out of these sensations. This was his famous theory of sensationalism. Hobbes justified absolute monarchy on the ground that it was the only rational means by which selfish human nature could be dealt with. This theory was propounded in his book *Leviathan* (1651). His further speculations led others to think about the need for a rational form of government.

John Locke (1632-1704) acknowledged the theory of sensationalism by Hobbes as a great contribution and adopted it in his work, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. On the basis of Hobbes's theory of sensationalism, Locke founded the school of empiricism. It believes that knowledge is derived from sensory experience. This school advocated that knowledge should be based upon experience and reason. The empiricists discredited the theory of innate ideas of Plato.

## Sovereignty and Social Contract

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Hobbes advocated absolute monarchy, as mentioned before, because he thought that it was a dire political necessity, and hardly cared for the right to revolt against tyranny. He detested the 1648 revolution in England. In contrast Locke justified the Glorious Revolution in England (1688) on grounds of violation of social contract and popular sovereignty. But Rousseau went one step ahead by saying that government should exist and continue only by popular consent. Thus popular sovereignty theory found a doughty champion in the person of Rousseau. Rousseau appealed to emotions rather than reason and rational thinking and Hayes says that he "possessed the soul of a poet". Whereas Hobbes described the "natural man" as a selfish and dangerous brute, Rousseau called him "noble savage". As against the wickedness and greedy civilised men of contemporary times of Hobbes, Rousseau painted the picture of "natural man" with inherent goodness. In the state of nature all men were free and equal and there were no quarrels, no oppressive taxes and no wars. In the *Origin of Inequality Among Men*, Rousseau narrated how all this changed for the worse. In his *Social Contract* (1762) he explained how

governments came to be set up by people on the basis of contract. Locke's popular sovereignty theory was given a new colour and glorified by Rousseau for which he was both condemned and eulogised. Some of his admirers included David Hume, Thomas Paine, Herder and Kant. Kant borrowed ideas of Rousseau and spread them through his writings in Germany. Rousseau's call of "Back to nature" found numerous followers.

## **Legal and Constitutional Studies**

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In legal and constitutional studies one comes across great jurists like Blackstone (Commentaries – 1765), Montesquieu (Spirit of the Laws) and Beccaria (On Crimes and Punishments – 1761). Another great jurist of the time was Jeremy Bentham who, based on his researches in law, politics, economics, ethics and religion, propounded the "Benthamite philosophy". His utilitarian philosophy urged "the greatest good of the greatest number". His doctrine in terms of economics implied free trade, low taxes, efficient government, unrestricted competition and abolition of monopoly. In terms of politics, it implied civil liberty, individual liberty and constitutional government with emphasis on individual liberty. The Benthamite philosophy found staunch advocates in James Mill (1773-1836) and his son, John Stuart Mill (1806-73). Through his great works, namely, Fragment on Government and Principles of Morals and Legislation, Bentham advocated political and utilitarian reforms respectively. In keeping with Benthamite philosophy Adam Smith propounded *Laissez faire* in his *Wealth of Nations*.

## **Joseph II of Austria, the Last Enlightened Despot (1765-90)**

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Emperor Joseph II of Austria may be reckoned as the last great and enlightened despot of the eighteenth century. He absorbed fully the great ideas emanating from philosophers, and his reign witnessed many beneficial reforms. Son of Maria Theresa and Francis of Lorraine, Joseph II was a great admirer of Voltaire and Rousseau. He declared, "I have made philosophy the legislator of my empire; its logical principles shall

transform Austria."

## His Reforms

His religious reforms were aimed at purging the Catholic church of its “superstition” and “unreason” and establishing state control over it. He confiscated church lands, nominated bishops, abolished many monasteries, and extended his control over papal decrees in his dominions. Jews and Protestants were accorded equal rights with Catholics, and the clergy received training in state-run schools.

His political reforms aimed at welding his heterogeneous dominions with polyglot population, diverse races and different creeds, into a nation. He introduced administrative reforms by dividing his empire into thirteen provinces, each under a military commander. The keynote of his administrative policy was centralisation and everything was managed from the capital at Vienna. He did not allow local privileges, and in pursuance of his policy, abolished the Hungarian Diet. German became the official language of the empire. He reformed the judicial administration by introducing a uniform code of justice. He removed all privileges including those of the nobles and clergy, and compelled them to share the burden of taxes like the rest in the society. The clergy no longer controlled the education of children and it came under state control. All children received education. His greatest act was to abolish serfdom in his empire. He allowed serfs to marry without the lord's consent. They enjoyed the right to sell lands, and in return for their services to the lord, they were to pay rent. He made his subjects happy and prosperous by paying attention to agriculture, industry and free education. He received full support for his reforms from Chancellor Kaunitz. But the clergy and nobles hated him and the conservative public did not show sympathy for his ideals. Hungarians protested loudly for they lost local autonomy. Their constitution had to be restored finally. Joseph II died a disappointed man after seeing that all his reforms were being nullified.

## Other Despots

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King Charles III of Spain initiated political, economic and religious reforms. He suppressed the Jesuits and abolished inquisitions. He

improved economic conditions by encouraging scientific farming. King Joseph I of Portugal too worked hard to improve the material well-being of his subjects. King Gustavus III of Sweden was well spoken of as an enlightened despot.

## **Enlightened Monarchy in France Declines**

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On his deathbed Louis XIV called his great grandson and heir, Louis XV (1715-74) to his bedside and cautioned thus: "My child, you will soon be sovereign of a great kingdom. Do not forget your obligations to God; remember that it is to Him you owe all that you are. Endeavour to live at peace with your neighbours; do not imitate me in my fondness for war, nor in the exorbitant expenditure which I have incurred. Take counsel in all your actions. Endeavour to relieve the people at the earliest possible moment, and thus to accomplish what, unfortunately, I am unable to do myself." (Hayes, Modern Europe to 1870)

Although it was a good and timely advice, Louis XV and his ministers hardly heeded it. During his long reign France was involved in at least three conflicts—Polish Election, Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War—which entailed heavy expenditure in terms of men and money. The only gain which accrued to France was the acquisition of Corsica and Lorraine. But these wars permanently damaged her reputation as a great maritime and colonial power. Britain usurped her place after the peace of Paris in 1763, and the glory of France began to decline rapidly. Her fortunes were at the lowest ebb due to the misrule of King Louis XV.

## **Petticoat Government**

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Louis XV was endowed with intelligence and ability, and he could sense the impending doom. But he was not prepared to stem the rot that had crept into his administration. It must be remembered that his government was highly autocratic and he alone could have saved France from impending danger. But he loathed serious work and shamelessly led a debaucherous and profligate life. He spent money like water to satisfy his many mistresses, chief among them being Madam de Pompadour and Madam du Barry. These "putty-headed mistresses"

often influenced him in vital political matters of the state. After the death of Cardinal Fleury (Principal Minister) in 1743 there was virtual chaos in France. France, enjoying a highly centralised administration required the necessary advice and direction from the head of the state and that was not forthcoming. Choiseul, the new chief minister (1764-70), tried to stem the rot but he was swept aside by Madam du Barry, the new mistress of the King.

### Arbitrary Nature of Bourbon Monarchy

The disastrous wars of Louis XV undermined his popularity and prestige, and the loyalty of the people to Bourbon monarchy was shaken. All policies of the king came to be severely criticised. King Louis XV tried to crush opposition to him through the infamous letters de cachet (letters bearing the royal seal used by officials to arrest persons in France). These letters were issued in blank for use by privileged orders or petty officials by which enemies of the King were arrested and sent to prison. Many a time these blank orders were misused by nobles and administrative officials to crush their own enemies.

Louis XV abolished the Parliament of Paris and other local Parliaments which began to criticise him on matters of taxation and foreign policy issues. In their place he set up courts and strictly confined their activities to judicial work. Realising the impending storm that was gathering in France, the king declared, "Apres moi, le deluge" (After me the deluge).

## Suggested Readings

1. Brinton, Crane, Ideas and Men.
2. Snyder, Louis L., The Age of Reason.
3. Becker, Carl, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers.
4. Frankel, Charles, The Faith of Reason.

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# The French Revolution of 1789

*T*he French Revolution of 1789 is considered by many historians as an important landmark in the history of mankind. A total rejection of the old system of government followed by an attempt to build a new society characterised the revolution. The new society was to be based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. In its process of promising a new life for the common people, the revolution resulted in violence and massacres. Even the king and the queen were not spared from being executed.

### Ancien Régime

Although feudalism had disappeared in France, its vestiges continued to dominate the French life. For example, the maxim that 'nobles fight, clergy pray and people pay', no longer held valid. The nobles surrendered their power to the king but retained their fiefs. They enjoyed a new status—as courtiers—and enjoyed all the old privileges. Similarly, the church owned one-fifth of the land in France and enjoyed its revenues. There were about a few hundred higher clergy—men who had easy access to the king. Like the nobles, the church hardly paid taxes to the state. Whenever proposal was put forward to the king for taxing the church, the church dignitaries threatened, "Do not make us choose between God and the King, for you know what our answer will be."

The conduct of the church was most reprehensible and its corruption was disgusting. A majority of the bishops and archbishops lived in luxury. Except for their dress which symbolised their profession, their daily life was anything but simple and chaste. It is not to be mistaken that all clergymen lived like this. A large number of lower clergy lived in

simplicity and poverty. They carried on their pious profession in spite of the moral degeneration of their superiors. At the time of revolution many of them threw in their lot with the Third Estate while their superiors stood solidly behind the despotic king. The church formed the First Estate, and nobles the Second Estate.

The bulk of the population of France constituted the Third Estate. The cream of the Third Estate was the upper middle class which was composed of lawyers, physicians, teachers, writers and merchants. It was this class which agitated for the abolition of privileges, and after having failed to achieve this through constitutional means, they had recourse to revolution. Unfortunately, none at the upper echelons of the society regarded this class anything but important. Abbé Sieyès aptly remarked, "What is the Third Estate?" "Everything." "What has it being in politics until now?" "Nothing." "What does it desire?" "To become something." The upper middleclass resented being left out from occupying suitable positions in the civilian and military administration. They were talented, capable and intelligent. But they were denied their share in the political life of the country. They envied the hold of the privileged class on the monarch. They were worried about the financial bankruptcy facing the country. This disgruntled lot produced fiery politicians who played an important role during the revolution.

The bulk of the rural population was composed of ordinary peasants who bore a crushing burden of many taxes. They paid taxes in cash and kind to the state, their landlord and the church. For example, the peasants were humiliated when they were asked to work on construction of roads for a certain number of days for their noble. They had to buy some amount of salt. They had to grind their corn at the landlord's mill. In all they paid 86 per cent of their income in the form of taxes to the state, nobles and the church. Whenever they could not meet the demands of these institutions they were punished. They were sent to prison and they did not have a fair trial. Their wretched conditions made them angry but they did not go to the extent of revolting in the early years of the revolution. During 1788-89 drought conditions prevailed in many parts of France. Unable to bear the pangs of hunger, many peasants drifted towards the cities hoping to get some relief. A loaf of bread which cost 50 per cent of his daily income earlier cost a full day's wage on the

eve of the revolution.

What made conditions of the peasants miserable in France was the uncertainty of the taxes imposed upon them. A royal council presided over by the king had the right to secretly decide on the enhancement of land tax against which a peasant had no opportunity to seek redressal. When the demand was put up the peasants had no money to pay and appealed to courts. But the courts decided in favour of the government and invariably it resulted in the imprisonment of peasants. Thousands of them thus spent their time in gaol. The spirit of rebellion was not in their blood and they meekly submitted themselves to all kinds of humiliations. But the drought of 1788-89 broke the peasant's back and drove him to lose his cool. It is clear that the French society was ridden by discriminations and social inequalities. Two and a half million artisans working mostly in cities were generally organised into guilds. But the rules prescribed were not conducive to industrial growth.

## The Role of Philosophers

### **Voltaire (1694-1778)**

The chaotic conditions of France attracted the attention of the French philosophers, namely, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and others. The most celebrated among them was Voltaire. He held the attention of the educated French, as no one had, by his prolific writings. As critic, poet, scholar, historian, lampoonist and dramatist he highlighted in his themes the prevailing injustices. In his inimitable style of writing – for which he became famous all over Europe – he ridiculed many institutions, not sparing even the monarchy. His vitriolic attack was specially directed against the church for its corruption and pretensions. He was neither an atheist nor an anarchist but what he desired most was that society should be purged of its evils and based on just principles. Since he was a rebel he was driven out of the country. Even the most powerful rulers of Europe trembled at the whisper of his name. They hated him for his courage and persecuted him for his name. It was an irony of fate that even after his death, the Abbé who performed his last rites was dismissed from his post. The only important person who admired his

writings and fearlessness was King Frederick the Great of Prussia who honoured him in his court.

### Montesquieu (1689-1753)

Montesquieu was an eminent lawyer and a political scientist. Being endowed with scientific temper he observed the maladies affecting the French society and political system. He traced the causes and put forward his ideas in his book, *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of Laws), a product of great labour. In this work he examined the merits and defects of various constitutions of the world, and felt that the British model was the best. He thought highly of its separation of powers which resulted in the protection of fundamental rights of the people. The separation of powers provided for in the constitution would eliminate autocratic rule. He envisaged a government working by checks and balance system. Montesquieu was not a radical. He did not even think of a possible overthrow of French monarchy as a solution to the prevailing political condition in France. His writings, along with those of the English writers, Locke and Hobbes, went a long way in influencing the founding fathers of the American Constitution.

### Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78)

Unlike the above philosophers whose impact had been anything but marginal on society, Rousseau's contribution to the outbreak of the French Revolution was direct and positive. Although he did not live to see this great upheaval, he had been its founding father. Rousseau was born in Geneva and had a stormy career. He was driven out of his native place and therefore settled in France. He led an unconventional life and the spirit of revolt was very much within him. He was highly emotional by temperament, and injustice and cruelty stirred him deeply. He became a philosopher and visionary. His *Contract Social* (Social Contract) "struck France with a force of a new gospel". He began the book with a stirring slogan, "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains". He found a sovereign remedy to the ills of humanity in the establishment of an ideal state (with virtuous citizens) obeying the general will of the people. He visualised the establishment of a direct democracy where all the

people would express their opinions freely and frankly and decide many issues. His writings evoked necessary passion and zeal and prepared them for a revolution. Rousseau believed in popular sovereignty. If the king does not obey the general will of the people he was breaking the contract, and the people have every right to choose a new government. Liberty, equality and fraternity became the watchwords and they were being heard at the time of the revolution in 1789.

## Encyclopaedists and Physiocrats

Led by Diderot, the encyclopaedists published thirty-four volumes of encyclopaedia between 1751 and 1772 which were a mine of information. They critically examined the deteriorating situation in France in many fields. To the revolutionaries the volumes rendered a great service by indicating the morass into which the country had fallen. The French school of physiocrats explained the causes of the bewildering economic situation in the country and a drift towards bankruptcy. They suggested certain reforms to be carried out. One of the reforms was the abolition of all taxes except on land. They advocated a free flow of trade by eliminating octroi levied on goods at each provincial border.

## The Example of American Revolution

The people living in the 13 British colonies in America overthrew the rule of the British government by waging a war of independence between 1775 and 1783. The example of the American colonists inspired the French. It was an irony of fate that France, which took revenge upon the British by lending support to the colonists, was herself affected by it. If American colonists waged a war of independence because they did not like being imposed a few pence taxes, then it would be all the more justified that the French should rise in revolt for all kinds of tyranny inflicted on them by the king. For example, the king enjoyed power over life and death by issuing the notorious *lettre de cachet* by which persons were imprisoned without any trial. Hundreds of political prisoners were held in dark dungeons of the Bastille Fort and similarly thousands of peasants were arrested and imprisoned since they could not pay the increased land tax.

## Financial Crisis

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Far more serious and direct threat to the French Government was that of the impending financial crisis. Its origin can be traced to the reckless expenditure incurred for waging wars by the French king, Louis XIV. His successor, Louis XV, was warned of the consequences but he simply ignored it by saying "After me the deluge". The situation became worse when France, with its meagre resources, decided to lend assistance to the American colonists. The expenses of the royal household went on increasing with the arrival of Queen Marie Antoinette. The French government resorted to borrowing money from the public to meet the mounting expenditure.

It may be of interest to note that the prices rose steadily during the eighteenth century due to population growth (50 per cent) on the one hand, and the general decline in agricultural and industrial products on the other. The government's income was around 472 million livres, half of which went towards meeting the debts. The government sometimes defaulted on its debt payments.

Rising prices diminished the people's buying power, and thus added to their misery. At the same time the privileged sections, oblivious of the sufferings of the common people, held on to their special rights. The bad harvests of 1788 and 1789 further pushed up the price of a loaf of bread. Compelled by these circumstances, the peasants left their villages and moved towards cities. To their dismay they found that in a city like Paris conditions were no better.

## King Louis XVI

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King Louis XVI ascended the throne in 1774. Although he was young, sincere and honest his fickle-mindedness disabled him to meet the challenge of his time. He had neither the capacity nor the will to carry the heavy burden of responsibility. His marriage to Marie Antoinette, the Austrian princess, proved ruinous for him. She was a foreigner and therefore the French disliked her. She lived in luxury unaware of the plight of the common people. Her influence and vested interests spelt disaster for the king who was seriously engaged in repairing the financial

situation. So the king “instead of directing events ... drifted with the tide”.

Turgot was appointed the Comptroller General of Finance (1774–76), and after seeing the balance-sheet suggested drastic cut in the expenditure. But the nobles found it galling and they worked to get him dismissed. Jacques Necker, a Geneva banker, was appointed the Director General of Finance in June 1777. He suggested that taxing the nobles was the only remedy to overcome the financial problems plaguing France. He put an end to the practice of perpetual ownership of real-estate by institutions and corporations (mortmain). He established assemblies with executive powers for the provinces of Berry and Haute-Guyenne in which representation for the Third Estate (commoners) was brought on par with that of the other two estates put together. Voting in these assemblies was by head (one vote per deputy or representative) rather than by order (one collective vote per estate) which was the existing norm in the rest of the country. Necker’s reforms made him powerful enemies from among the nobility. He annoyed the privileged section by publishing a balance-sheet showing income and expenditure of the state. The report infuriated the revolutionaries since it revealed the enormous sums wasted on the privileged sections. However, Necker’s decision to borrow huge amounts of money to finance French participation in America’s war of independence proved to be his undoing. It worsened France’s already precarious financial situation. He had to resign from his post in May 1781. The next to come was Calonne who believed in pleasing all by overcoming the situation by means of borrowing heavily. To sum up his philosophy in his own words, “A man who wishes to borrow must appear to be rich, and to appear rich he must dazzle by spending freely”. He borrowed a sum of \$300,000,000 within three years. But people got wise after a few years and stopped buying government bonds with the result the treasury became empty in 1786. He advised the king to tax the nobles to save the state from bankruptcy. He was forced to resign like his predecessors. Necker was recalled as Finance Minister on August 26, 1788, and it was not long before a decision was taken to summon the Estates-General or the States-General (Parliament), which had not met since 1614. The main purpose for summoning the States-General was to get its consent for a fresh dose of taxes to be levied upon

the people.

## Estates-General (May-June 1789)

Amidst great excitement elections were held and the common people drew up *cahiers* (a list of demands or grievances to be redressed) and presented it to the members elected to the Third Estate. The people's demands mostly related to the stopping of arbitrary arrests, abolition of *corvée* (forced labour) and prior consent of the people before fresh taxes were to be levied. The king and the finance minister were unable to deal with the new States-General, particularly the Third Estate being very assertive and vocal in its demands. For more than a month since the commencement of the Estates-General, the first two estates— the First Estate (the clergy) and the Second Estate (the nobles)—had not agreed with the Third Estate (commoners) regarding various issues, including on the right to vote per head and uniting of all the three estates to form a single body. On June 17, 1789, the members of the Third Estate decided to break away from the Estates-General and form the National Assembly.

## Tennis Court Oath (June 20, 1789)

On June 20, 1789, the members of the National Assembly arrived at their regular meeting hall only to see it locked. The reason given was that it was being renovated for the upcoming *séance royale* (royal session). The representatives left in a huff and assembled in the nearby royal tennis court. They (576 of the 577 members) took a pledge on June 20, 1789, that they would continue to meet till they draft and promulgate a new constitution. In the royal session of June 23, 1789, the king expressed his displeasure at the turn of events. In his address to all the estates he said what the Third Estate had done was unconstitutional. He ordered that the three Estates should meet separately. While the members of the first two estates dispersed cheerfully, the members of the Third Estate did not leave the chamber. When the grandmaster of the ceremonies de Breze announced to them to clear the Hall, Mirabeau (a rebel noble) stood up and declared, "Sir, go tell your master that we are here by the will of the people and nothing but bayonet shall drive us out." Two days later a large number of clergymen and some nobles joined the National

Assembly. The king finally yielded, and on June 27, 1789, asked the rest of the nobles and clergy too to join the National Assembly. Thus, legitimacy was conferred on the National Assembly.

### Siege of the Bastille, July 14, 1789

The situation seemed to have been resolved, but only superficially. The king was smarting at the humiliation meted out to him. There were rumours that he was bringing troops from the provinces to control the mob violence in Paris. Heeding the advice of his close advisers he dismissed Necker from the finance ministry and ordered him to leave the country. The dismissal of Necker and the subsequent order to expel him brought about instantaneous and violent reaction from the Paris mob which had already come under the influence of great demagogues. The unruly mob collected arms and attacked the Fortress Prison of Bastille, a symbol of royal despotism, on 14 July, 1789. When the Swiss guards tried to prevent their entry, the unruly mob chopped off their heads, entered the prison and released the prisoners. The capture of Bastille was momentous signifying the beginning of the revolution. When the king heard the news of the fall of Bastile, he said, "This is a great revolt." But the Duc de Liancourt replied, "No, Sir, it is a great revolution."

The significance of the siege of Bastille should not be lost sight of. The king recognised the National Assembly and reinstated Necker on July 16, 1789. The bourgeoisie of Paris formed a city-government called the Paris Commune. Similarly towns and cities had their own municipal governments. The members of the Court Party consisting of Duke of Artois, Conde and Polignac fled France. Some of the liberal-minded nobles and clergy came forward to renounce their rights and privileges voluntarily. The National Guards was formed, commanded by General Lafayette, the Bourbon flag was discarded and the flag of the revolution – the Tricolore – was adopted. Three days later the king had to acknowledge whatever had happened as *fait accompli* and accept the new flag.

### Peasants' Revolt

In the provinces, the peasants rose against the nobles and burnt their

castles, and also records mentioning feudal dues. There was excitement and violence. Municipal governments and National Guards were formed on the Paris model in all towns. On August 4, a report on the state of the nation was submitted to the Assembly. The report talked about outbreaks of violence against feudal dues everywhere, and on the same evening the Assembly witnessed nobles surrendering their rights and privileges. The Bishop of Nancy gave up the privileges of his order. Feudalism was abolished. So also serfdom. Feudal dues, titles and guilds were decimated. The principle of equality was established and class distinction eradicated. Louis XVI was hailed the "Restorer of French liberty" by the Assembly.

The price of bread rose and many suggestions were put forward to bring it down but the king rejected all of them. In the meantime, there was a plot by the counter-revolutionaries led by the king's brother, Count of Artois, to save the country from the revolution. The queen also wanted the revolution to come to an end. The decree of August 4 was not yet ratified by the king, thus confirming the suspicion that he too was plotting against the revolution. The famine was spreading fast and rumours went round in Paris that the king had given a banquet to honour the crack army regiments. On that occasion the revolutionary flag was trampled upon in the presence of the queen, and the Assembly was threatened.

On October 5, thousands of women marched from Paris to Versailles drawing cannons with them to demand bread, and punishment for those who had insulted the 'tricolore flag' of the revolution. Expecting trouble, the National Guards led by Lafayette also followed the procession at a safe distance. Standing near the closed gates of the place they demanded bread and when the queen came to know of it she said, "If they don't have bread, let them eat cakes". The crowd broke open the gates, killed some guards, and entered the queen's apartment. The queen fled to the king's apartment with her children. It was at this time that Lafayette intervened to save the royal family from the fury of the mob. But the king had to yield to the demands of the demonstrators, that he should leave his palace with his family and live in the Tuileries (in Paris). The royal family meekly submitted and on their return to Paris the women shouted, "We are bringing back the baker, the baker's wife, and the

baker's son". The Assembly too followed suit, and thenceforth, the king and the Assembly were watched by the Parisian mob. Amidst shouts of approval and disapproval by the mob the Assembly began to function, and the representatives could not express their views freely.

## The Constitution

The Constitution, when drafted in 1791, had a preamble like that of the American preamble. It included the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" echoing the aspirations of Rousseau. It asserted that all men, "are free and equal, that people are sovereign, that law is an expression of the popular will, and that in making of it the people may participate directly, or indirectly through their representatives". The first Constitution of France was thus drafted. A constitutional monarchy was established with the provision of a veto to be exercised by the king. A single assembly was established instead of bicameral legislature. Suffrage was restricted to those who paid certain amount of taxes to the state. An elective judiciary was established. To evolve a new political system the thirty-two old provinces were abolished, and in their place eighty-three departments (of uniform size) were established. Each department was sub-divided into *arrondissements* and *cantons*.

A decentralised system of administration was introduced where the role of the central government was subjected to certain restrictions. Central government officials hardly found a place in the local set-up, but the local government were to carry out the orders of the central government.

On many counts, the proposed constitution suffered from inherent defects. The separation of powers in the three branches of government seemed to have left no scope for inter-communication. The king's veto was not final since the constitution provided a solution for overcoming it. The efficiency of national government suffered a setback as it was split into eighty-three departments, the centre having little control over them due to the absence of its deputed officials there.

The church property was nationalised. Henceforth all church officials were to be appointed by the central government. The church lands which constituted a fifth of all cultivable lands were sold to tide over the immediate financial crisis. As lands could not be sold immediately, the government issued *assignats* or paper currency with church property as its security. These assignats could not be used to demand gold but could be used to purchase lands. More than forty-five million assignats were

issued between 1789 and 1796.

The civil constitution of the clergy turned the officials of the church into officials of the state, with fixed salaries. The number of dioceses was reduced to eighty-three, one each to serve a department. The higher officials of the church came to be elected by those who elected civil officials also. The salaries of the higher church officials were reduced and that of the lower order slightly increased. The civil constitution of the clergy hurt the feelings of devout Catholics since it transferred the control of the church from the hands of the Pope to the hands of the state. The Pope condemned the civil constitution and thereupon the assembly insisted on all the church officials to take an oath of loyalty to the state. It split the clergy into two groups, juring and non-juring clergy. The State supported the former and devout Catholics the latter. Thus, there was a confrontation between the church and the state.

### King Flees to Varennes (June 1791)

Being a devout Catholic, the king felt deeply anguished at the inclusion of the civil constitution of the clergy into the constitution. His conscience was deeply disturbed but he was helpless. He was forced to sign the constitution. In the meanwhile, the country was facing chaos with a large number of shops and factories closing down. In the provinces people protested against the abolition of their provincial Parliaments. Similarly, the officials of the church staged a revolt against the civil constitution of the clergy. Mirabeau, advocate of a strong executive, died amidst crises. Had he lived on, things might have been different. With his passing away "Old France was buried", and "new France lost a far-seeing pilot". Everybody thought that he would have saved France from total anarchy. He would have established a stable constitutional monarchy in France. These dark forebodings left the king with no alternative other than to plan for leaving the country in secrecy. He was also thinking of securing assistance from a neighbouring country like Austria. His brother-in-law was the Austrian emperor who was ready to help him. Dressed as a valet, the king and his family fled Paris in a coach. But before the coach reached the borders they were apprehended at the border town of Varennes. The king and his family were brought back to the Tuileries like

prisoners, the crowd hurling abuses at them. His powers remained suspended. Even the extremists whose goal was constitutional monarchy now lost their faith in the king. In these circumstances a republican party was founded. The national assembly was dissolved and the representatives agreed not to contest the ensuing elections.

## Political Clubs

Since the outbreak of the revolution, Paris witnessed the birth of a few political clubs. The most prominent among them were the Jacobin and Cordelier. The Jacobin Club was composed of many assembly members and local politicians who discussed the problems confronting the nation. The most influential leader of this club was Robespierre, a radical democrat and an opponent of the republican party. The radical democrats gained more power and influence than the conservatives. In all, the branches of Jacobin club numbered more than 2,000. They were existing in all towns and villages of France. The Jacobin Club maintained good discipline among its members and its orders were obeyed by one and all. Its members gained great hold over the Assembly in the course of time. At times they compelled the Assembly to obey their wishes.

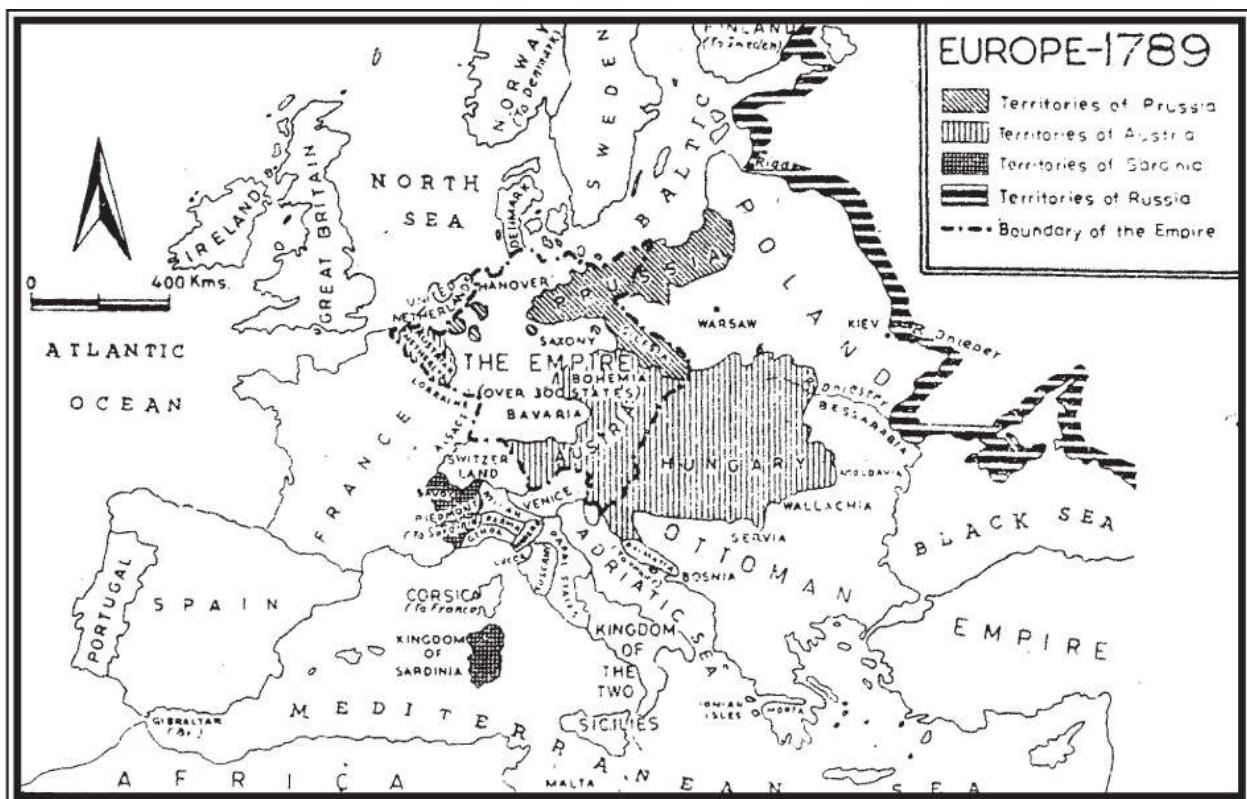
More radical in outlook and character was the Cordelier Club whose members were mostly from the lower strata of society. Ever since the unsuccessful flight of the king the Cordeliers thought of establishing a republic with the workers' support. Danton, a lawyer of great repute, became its popular leader. The club operated in Paris only and did not have branches elsewhere in the country. The members of the Cordelier Club brought their influence and will on the government.

The Girondists were a group of Assembly members who hailed from a part of France called Gironde. Some of their great leaders were Pierre Vergniaud, Isnard and Buzot. The Girondins were great admirers of the glories of ancient Greece and Rome. They were very much inspired by Madam Roland. The Girondins longed to establish a republic. They clashed with the Jacobins during the dark days of the French Revolution.

## The Revolutionary Wars

When the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II came to know of his brother-in-law's futile attempt to flee from France and his subsequent humiliation at the hand of the Paris mob, he was angry. Leopold II and Frederick William II of Prussia issued a joint statement called the Declaration of Pillnitz (August 27, 1791) that expressed solidarity with Louis XVI. They also urged the other European rulers to help Louis XVI

regain the French crown. It posed a serious threat to the success of the revolution. Following the Declaration of Pillnitz the revolution witnessed its darkest period. The émigrés of Coblenz and Worms were grouping themselves on the French border to invade France. They were being supported by a few rulers of Europe who were afraid of the spread of the French Revolution beyond its borders. They felt that their own positions were being seriously threatened by the excesses of the revolution. The action of the émigrés brought a reprisal. The French assembly declared war on them on April 20, 1792. Both the supporters and opponents wanted this war to go on for their own reasons. The former expected that the king would get an opportunity to recover his power and glory and the latter an opportunity to test the loyalty of the king for the cause of the revolution. The coming of the war on the border changed the very character of the revolution. It led to dangerous situation and culminated in the execution of the king and the queen.



The reverses experienced on the borders, especially the capture of Verdun leaving the route to Paris wide open to the enemies caused great alarm in France. The Parliament came under increasing pressure of the

Paris Commune. The people turned against the king, when the Duke of Brunswick, the commander of the allied armies (of Prussia and Austria), issued a manifesto ordering the people of France to restore power to Louis XVI. It said that if the subjects try to punish him and his family they would "exact an exemplary and ever memorable vengeance". The manifesto raised doubts in the minds of the people of France about the loyalty of the king to the revolution. It endangered his position. The French decided to avenge the insult. The direct outcome of this manifesto was the outbreak of an insurrection (August 10, 1792) in France. The king and his family fled the Tuileries which was besieged by the mob and took shelter in the assembly itself. There was large scale violence which resulted in the death of eight hundred soldiers and five thousand people. The Jacobins masterminded the attack on the Tuileries. They overthrew the municipal government of Paris with the intention of directing the affairs of the country. To achieve this, they suspended the king, forced the legislative assembly to obey its orders, and ordered the framing of a new constitution. Intimidated, the legislative assembly called for a convention for this purpose. Under orders of the commune it issued a declaration about the ensuing elections which were to be based on universal suffrage. After the ouster of the king, France became a truly democratic country. The approach of the allied armies towards France had a terrible impact on her affairs. What followed in September 1792 was ruthless massacre of the royalist supporters. Marat, a Jacobin leader, proved himself to be the most bloodthirsty monster by killing hundreds of nobles, non-jurors and the royalists. The 'September massacres' caused a deep cleavage between the Girondists who wished to punish Marat and the Jacobins who remained indifferent. The convention met on September 20, 1792, the day on which the revolutionaries inflicted a humiliating defeat upon the allied armies at the French border town of Valmy. The progress of the invading foreign troops was thus halted.

## The National Convention (1792-95)

The National Convention, on being summoned after the suspension of the king for treason, unanimously voted for the abolition of monarchy in France on September 21, 1792. It ordered that all public events should

henceforth be dated from the first year of the republic. It appointed a committee to draft a new constitution for the republic.

The Girondins and Jacobins entered into a protracted struggle for power, the former having its political base in the countryside and the latter in the capital itself. Their differences arose over the outbreak of 'September massacres' perpetrated by Marat. While both the Girondins and Jacobins wanted republican form of government, they were at variance over its functioning. The former desired constitutional approach to solve issues while the latter believed in applying brute force. The Girondins hated the Jacobin leaders, namely, Robespierre, Marat and Danton. The last named showed his anxiety to bridge the gulf between the Girondins and Jacobins for which he incurred the wrath of his friends.

The king was tried for treason, found guilty and sent to the guillotine on January 21, 1793. The Girondins pleaded for leniency but to no avail. The king proved to be "greater on the scaffold than he had been upon the throne".

The king's execution led to much turmoil in the country. The enemies increased in number both inside and outside the country. Austria and Prussia were not alone in opposing the French revolution. A few other countries such as England, Russia, Spain, Holland and German states also joined to put down the revolution. Civil war broke out inside the country. The peasants of La Vendee known for their loyalty to the church and the nobles staged a revolt against the republic. Charles Dumouriez, one of the able commanders of the French army, became a traitor by joining the enemies.

The odds facing the National Convention proved to be crucial to its very survival. Therefore it had to take drastic steps to meet the external and internal threats. It formed three committees, namely, a Committee of General Security, Committee of Public Safety, and a Revolutionary Tribunal. It voted to raise the strength of the French army by half-a-million soldiers to meet the threat of internal and external dangers. The National Convention adopted the means of militarism and terrorism to overawe its enemies. Unfortunately, both the Jacobins and the Girondists could not unite, for, the Marat affair continued to divide them. His case was sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal which finally exonerated him.

Being a great leader of the Paris Commune, his release was widely acclaimed. The Paris Commune turned its hostility towards the Girondists. It organised a revolt against the Girondists who were in majority (200 members as against 100 Jacobins) in the National Convention. The members of the Paris Commune with a large force surrounded the building that housed the National Convention, and demanded the expulsion of the Girondin leaders. Despite protests from that body, 24 Girondins were arrested. Thus the Paris Commune became a virtual dictator after taking over the National Convention. The Girondists called upon the people of the country to rebel against the tyranny of the Paris Commune. Revolts occurred in Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux and Caen.

### Reign of Terror (September 5, 1793-July 27, 1794)

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The National Convention which believed in militarism and terrorism, first turned its attention towards meeting the crisis which had arisen in 60 of the 83 departments in France. A provisional government was immediately set up and its supreme executive authority was vested in the Committee of Public Safety which consisted of nine members (later increased to 11). It was entrusted with discharging manifold duties such as the conduct of foreign policy, supervision of the army and securing the support of the people. But soon the Committee of the Public Safety became a virtual dictator over the affairs of the nation. It passed orders for guillotining thousands of enemies of the Republic which included many Girondins. The Committee's Revolutionary Tribunal committed travesty of justice by passing orders of execution even on those who were patriotic but unfortunate enough to incur the wrath of the members. It was Madam Roland, who on reaching the scaffold exclaimed, "Oh liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name." A few months earlier the queen had been also tried and guillotined.

On the borders, the revolutionary army led by Carnot was able to defeat a coalition of European powers and thereby extend the borders of France. The ease with which the Revolutionary Army won its victory emboldened the National Convention to make a declaration to the effect

that the peoples of Europe groaning under the tyranny of kings shall be helped to overthrow their governments.

## Reforms of National Convention

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Among other measures the National Convention tried to implement, were the establishment of the National School, compulsory military service, a code of law for the whole country, and the introduction of certain social reforms. Imprisonment for not paying debts was abolished. Slavery in the colonies was eradicated. The law of primogeniture was discontinued and replaced by equal division of property among all male children. A uniform system of weights and measures was introduced. The metric system was introduced (which was later copied by other European nations).

## Religion

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The National Convention introduced several experiments in the field of religion under the influence of the Paris Commune. It suppressed the clergy and monasteries during its Reign of Terror. Afterwards it tried some novel experiments. It adopted a revolutionary calendar dating from September 22, 1792 which was based on scientific reasons and secularism. The churches were converted into temples of Reason during the Reign of Terror. The Atheistic Religion of Reason became official. However, after the fall of Robespierre, the National Convention declared that religion was a private thing which was concerned with the individual, and where the State would not interfere. Tolerance of all religions became a policy of the state and the church worship was resumed.

## Socialist Experiments

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The properties of the émigrés, nobles and landlords were confiscated and sold to the poor peasants. No compensation was paid to the owners. Forced loans and capital levies were imposed upon the wealthy to meet the financial crisis. The "laws of maximum" fixed the ceiling on prices of foodgrains, consumer goods and wages.

Political and social equalities were achieved through certain reforms, such as the abolition of the feudal customs and manners. Everybody was addressed as 'citizen'. The National Convention lost much of its fanaticism after the death of some Jacobin leaders. It tried to adopt the principles of republicanism and democracy. A new constitution was drawn up (the attempt made before the Reign of Terror having been given up) which was implemented in 1795. This constitution (also called Constitution of the Year III) was entrusted to two chambers, namely, a lower house with 500 elected members, and a Council of the Ancients composed of 250 members. A committee of five directors was appointed to execute the laws passed by the legislature. The directorate was assisted by a cabinet composed of ministers.

## Two Decrees

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National Convention issued two decrees partly to stem the revolt in the offing by the royalists against its tyrannical rule, and partly to secure the support of the people for its government. These two decrees provided that two-thirds of the members of each house would be chosen from among those who were present at the National Convention. Although the new constitution was overwhelmingly approved by the populace, the two decrees attached to it aroused suspicion and opposition. In the end, the decrees were ratified with slender majorities everywhere except in Paris.

## The Insurrection of Paris (October 5, 1795)

The city of Paris refused to ratify the constitution and also the supplementary decrees. It rose in revolt against the National Convention. The revolt was supported by the royalists, the bourgeoisie and others. The National Convention's protection (against the fury of the royalist mob of Paris) was entrusted to Barras, the commander-in-chief of the French army. Barras remembered a brave artillery officer who had saved Toulon from the British naval attack. His name was Napoleon, and to this young man was given the job of saving the National Convention from a mob attack. The Corsican artillery officer was immediately called to assist Barras to disperse the mob. Napoleon Bonaparte, who was then

almost an unknown artillery officer, carried out this job in an excellent manner with a “whiff of grapeshot.” Thus he saved the Republic which he was destined to overthrow in a few years, time.

## The Directory (1795-99)

The Directory was an executive body carrying out the laws passed by two elective councils, namely, the Council of the Ancients and the Council of 500. The Directory was composed of five directors—namely Carnot, Letourneur, La Révellière-Lépeaux, Rewbell and Barras. Carnot, the Director, has been described as the Organiser of Victory after his success in destroying a coalition of European powers against the French in the battle of Valmy. The directors were all not above board, since they always resorted to intrigues, plots and evil machinations to keep themselves in power. The most corrupt, immoral and unscrupulous among them was Barras who was responsible for bringing Napoleon into the limelight. It was at his instance that Napoleon married a beautiful widow, Josephine Beauharnais, and was given the command of the Italian expedition.

## Conspiracy against the Directory

During five years of its tenure (1795-99) the Directory was subjected to frequent attempts of overthrow. Plots and intrigues to overthrow them were all staged by the reactionaries and the royalists. The most important among them was the Babeuf plot of 1796 which was hatched by a young fanatical Jacobin orator, Babeuf. His aim was to revive the still-born constitution of 1793, which was drafted during the Jacobin years. He wanted to proclaim a ‘Republic of Equals’. The agents of this plot instigated many sections of Parisians including the army to revolt. But the revolt was suppressed and Babeuf was arrested and executed. Many admired his sincerity of purpose and endowed him the credit for attempting to found modern communism.

The Directory was confronted with a financial crisis due to corruption and wasteful expenditure at all levels of administration. To ensure the success at the battlefield, a million men were recruited to fight at the borders. This government of the Directory was also faced with the

problem of giving free food to the hungry population of Paris. Payment of national debt remained suspended. The loans taken by the government earlier from the public were repudiated. The credibility of the Directory was at stake. During the 1797 elections, one-third of the members of the assembly turned out to be hostile towards the Directory. The Directory cancelled the election of many deputies and got them arrested. Carnot, one of the Directors, was also dismissed.

## Foreign Policy

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Although the National Convention had been successful in expanding the northern boundaries of France after defeating three of her neighbours, Britain, Austria and Piedmont remained steadfast in its antagonism to the Republic. The Directory was in a state of war with these countries despite the withdrawal of Prussia, Spain and Holland from the coalition. So the Directory was compelled to carry on the war. The success of the Directory depended upon the success of the war. France had annexed Belgium after pushing back the invaders. However, she faced a great difficulty in defeating Austria. It must be remembered that Austria was the principal enemy of the French Revolution from the very beginning. Therefore, the Directory planned to send two military expeditions to defeat her. The first military expedition consisted of a large body of troops led by experienced commanders who were to march along the Danube, and the second was to be a small expedition against Austrian-Italy. Napoleon who was chosen to command the Italian expedition later, ruled France from 1799 to 1815.

## Aftermaths of the Revolution

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The French Revolution of 1789 inaugurated a new era in the history of mankind. Although it failed to establish a permanent Republic in France, nevertheless it marked the end of the *ancien régime*. The Bourbon monarchy came to an ignominious end with the execution of King Louis XVI. The revolution rejected tyranny, divine right, conservatism, and feudal vestiges associated with Bourbon rule in France.

The new constitution, after the fall of Bourbon monarchy, proclaimed the doctrine of popular sovereignty as enshrined in Rousseau's *Social*

*Contract*. The revolution stood for the establishment of a new society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. They were to be the guiding spirit of the nation.

Since the revolution desired to establish an egalitarian society, it rejected the privileges enjoyed by the nobles and the church. The new republican constitution brought about the total separation of the state and church in 1794. The church was made subordinate to the state and church lands were distributed among the poor peasants. The influence of religion on education was considerably reduced. The educational system was built on secular foundations.

To the long-oppressed peoples of Europe, the outbreak of the French Revolution came like manna from heaven. The triumph of the French Revolution ushered in an era of nationalism and liberalism and thus paved the way for revolutions in other parts of Europe during the nineteenth century. The cries for constitution and Parliament rent the air and the kings were forced to grant them.

Finally, the French Revolution caused great political turbulence which could not be controlled except by one great man, and he was Napoleon Bonaparte. Thus the French Revolution, after a violent turn, led to the emergence of a great dictator, Napoleon.

## Suggested Readings

1. Gershoy, Leo, *The French Revolution 1789-1799*.
2. Lefebvre, G., *The Coming of the French Revolution*.
3. Thompson, J.M., *Robespierre and the French Revolution*.
4. Gottschalk, Louis, *The Era of the French Revolution*.
5. Grant and Temperly, *Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*.
6. Goodwein, A. (ed.), *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 8.

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## Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon Bonaparte, who guided the destiny of Europe for nearly 15 years, was born at Ajaccio in the island of Corsica in 1769. His parents, Charles Bonaparte and Laetitia Ramolino, belonged to a family of lesser nobility and were in poor circumstances. His father died when Napoleon was young. Napoleon was sent to military schools at Brienne and Paris. He took his training seriously and showed keen interest in learning mathematics. He excelled in history and geography. He felt unhappy at his poverty because he was surrounded by children belonging to the nobility of France. They despised him for his Italian accent. He developed a hostile attitude towards the privileged classes of France and became an ardent admirer of Rousseau. He witnessed the famous days of the French Revolution but got disgusted with mob violence. He had also seen the attack on the Tuileries Palace, from where the king was forced to flee with his family and take shelter in the Legislative Assembly. He returned to Corsica and tried to write the history of that island. In the meantime, he lost his job as an artillery officer due to his frequent absence from the army. He spent some days as a penniless wanderer. He thought of joining the British East India Company. In August 1792, he was taken back into the Army and in 1793 he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the invading British fleet which had attacked Toulon. His clever strategy to drive out the English attracted the attention of some of the important members of the National Convention. In 1795, a royalist mob in Paris tried to attack the National Convention which was in session. The leader of the National Convention, Paul Barras, sought Napoleon's help to save the National Convention. Napoleon arrived to meet the attack of the menacing mob and with a

'whiff of grapeshot' he dispersed it. Barras commended his achievement. He encouraged Napoleon to marry a charming widow, Josephine Beauharnais. She was a member of high society, through whom he came in contact with important officials of the French government.

## Italian Expedition (1796-97)

The conquest of Italy, which was under control of Austria, became an important goal for the directors. Therefore, they planned simultaneous attack to engage Austria on both sides, that is, across her border, as well as in Italy. Napoleon was given the command of the Italian expedition while the French army was to attack Austria along the Danube. Napoleon crossed the Alps with an ill-clad and inadequately equipped French company of soldiers. Under his command this motley crowd of soldiers became a highly efficient fighting machine. His inspiration enabled them to fight bravely. He engaged the enemies after brilliant marches and gained lightning victories. His soldiers greatly admired his qualities of mind and heart and called him 'the little corporal'. Austrian Italy soon succumbed to Napoleonic tactics. Some of his daring exploits included the crossing of the Bridge of Lodi, the siege of Mantua, the battle at Arcola and the defence of Mantua. In all he fought eighteen big battles and was involved in sixty-five skirmishes. He carried away the booty which included the famous works of Italian art. With the fall of Mantua, Austria lost her hold over Italy. Piedmont surrendered Nice and Savoy. Lombardy was taken by the French army. Genoa was converted into Ligurian Republic. The small states of Parma and Modena were also subdued. Napoleon conducted negotiations with the enemies and sometimes turned the tables on them. He exhibited a flair for diplomacy and statecraft. In Italy he was hailed the 'liberator'. He defied the Pope in Italy and forced him to conclude an agreement with him. The Pope surrendered a small town, Avignon, and rare statues and manuscripts to Napoleon. In the meantime, he concluded the Treaty of Campo Formio (October 17, 1797) with the Austrian emperor. He bargained heavily and finally Austria was forced to surrender the Italian province of Lombardy, Genoa and part of Netherlands. Lombardy, parts of Venetia, Switzerland and adjoining territories were united into a republic called the Cisalpine

Republic. When he returned to France, he was hailed by the public as the Hero of France.

## Egyptian Campaign

Now the only enemy left to be dealt with was Britain. Britain lay formidable across the British Channel. But this Channel which Napoleon described as a 'ditch' remained impassable on account of the supremacy of the British navy. Napoleon suggested to the directorate that the sensitive nerve-spot of the enemy lay in her trade with the east. So the conquest of Egypt became imperative to throttle British economy as it would seriously affect British trade. In the meanwhile Tipu Sultan of Mysore appealed for French assistance to drive out the English from India. Taking all these into consideration the directors appointed Napoleon commander of the Egyptian expedition. Napoleon set sail for Egypt. On his way he avoided confronting the British ships. On his landing in Egypt he encountered the Mamelukes. He fought the Mamelukes in the Battle of the Pyramids (July 21, 1798) and defeated them. Egypt lay prostrate at his feet. Napoleon exclaimed to his soldiers, "Soldiers, from the summit of these Pyramids 40 centuries look down upon you". Subsequently he entered Cairo. Napoleon and his soldiers began to enjoy their glorious victory, hardly knowing that Lord Nelson, the famous British admiral, was fast reaching Aboukir Bay. Napoleon's dream of taking Europe in the rear or helping Tipu Sultan to expel the British from India was shattered. His fleet, stationed at Aboukir Bay, was almost destroyed by the British fleet led by Lord Nelson in the Battle of the Nile (August 1, 1798). Napoleon humoured the disgruntled soldiers by engaging them in fruitful endeavours. Egyptology owes much to his great efforts. Napoleon marched his army into Syria where he had an alternative plan of defeating Turkey, since the latter had declared war on France. Although his army reached Syria amidst thirst and heat and captured forts of Gaza and Jaffa, he was far from achieving his final objective. The British fleet led by Sydney Smith supported the Turks, and the progress of the French army was checked at Acre. By forced marches Napoleon's army reached Cairo. Although he did not achieve anything, he still boasted, and to lend support to his view, the Turks were badly

beaten at Aboukir Bay in July 1799. Fearing another British attack, Napoleon beat a hasty retreat without his army and reached Paris. The French hailed him as the conqueror of Egypt. Napoleon had heard in Egypt that the directorate had become unpopular and his presence in Paris would turn the situation to his advantage. He secretly planned to overthrow the Directory by a coup and come to power.

## **The Coup d'etat**

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Abbé Sieyès, a priest-cum-politician, always believed that the anarchy facing France could be overcome if an enlightened dictator came to power. He looked to Napoleon to take the cue, and accordingly Napoleon overthrew the Directory with the help of his brother and a few loyal soldiers on November 9, 1799. Had it not been for Napoleon's brother, Lucien Bonaparte, who was the President of the Council of Five Hundred, the Coup of the 18th and 19th Brumaire would have failed miserably. Lucien connived at his brother's attempt and brought about his success. In the evening the conspirators met and declared that the Directory was abolished. In its place they appointed three Consuls – Sieyès, Ducos and General Bonaparte – to lead the nation. The three Consuls declared loyalty to the Republic and the members started drafting the new Constitution of the Year VIII. The Consulate was to rule France for the next 10 years. The Republican government continued, and the first consul, Napoleon, could bring about the fruits of the revolution after signing the Peace of Amiens in 1802. Napoleon appointed Talleyrand to the foreign office and Fouche in the police department. Even reputed scientists were given portfolios and a body of experts sat in the Council of State. Napoleon permitted the émigrés to return to France. But amidst this facade of republican form of government, Napoleon assumed power as equal to that of King Louis XIV. No bill could be passed without his sanction. Even if a Bill was voted it could not become a law until it obtained his signature. Napoleon gave France a strong centre and appointed his followers as prefects and sub-prefects for each department and arrondissement respectively. The local citizens lost their effective voice in the local councils.

Napoleon set many things right to pacify the French. He suppressed

revolts in La Vendee and Brittany. He improved the finances of the country and gave religious freedom to the people. He devoted his entire energy to heal the wounds of the French people inflicted during the revolution.

## **Reconquest of Italy (1800)**

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While Napoleon was in Egypt a coalition of powers consisting of England, Russia and Austria had become active. Russia withdrew from the coalition as a protest against the British naval supremacy and followed armed neutrality. Austria recovered her territories in Italy by driving out the French, due to the ineptitude of the directors. Britain remained a supreme sea power. Napoleon turned his attention to the reconquest of Italy in 1800. In one of the most daring exploits of his career, Napoleon marched his army of 40,000 across the snow-covered Alps through the famous St. Bernard Pass, repeating the feat of the famous Carthaginian General, Hannibal. Cannons hidden in troughs of hollowed logs were dragged across the Pass. He challenged the Austrians at Marengo (June 14, 1800). He had almost lost the battle but for the providential appearance of his General, Louis Desaix. The Austrian commander left the field thinking that he had won, but the rout of his army came after his departure. On December 3, 1800, the Austrian army was again defeated at Hohenlinden (Germany). Austria finally accepted the Treaty of Lunéville (February 9, 1801). The result was that France regained a major part of northern Italy.

## **The Treaty of Amiens**

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Britain remained supreme. Therefore Napoleon proposed a peace treaty to Britain which was readily accepted by her in 1802. Hostilities between the two powers ceased. Napoleon turned his attention to improving the domestic conditions. In Britain the inferior Addington ministry which succeeded Pitt's had no strength left to continue the war. The Englishmen remarked after the treaty, "everybody was glad and no body was proud." Except Trinidad and Ceylon, Britain surrendered all her colonial conquests. She gave up her royal title to France, returned Malta to the Knights of St. John, and Minorca to Spain. Napoleon agreed to

evacuate the French army from Egypt, Naples and Portugal. The British tourists began to visit Paris to see how France was rebuilding herself after the revolution. The French empire stretched to the Rhine, Piedmont, Parma and Elba. Holland, Switzerland and Spain remained as subsidiary states. Portugal and Naples were too weak to resist French domination. France acquired Louisiana and West Indies.

## **The Renewal of War: Third Coalition**

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After a brief respite hostilities commenced between Britain and France. Napoleon considered improving shipbuilding and development of ports and dockyards with a view to meet the challenge of British sea power. Colonial expeditions were undertaken and satellite republics were set up in Europe. For example, the Cisalpine Republic in northern Italy, Batavian in Holland, and Helvetian in Switzerland. With the consent of Russia, Napoleon reorganised the 300 odd German states into 38 states. He became the consul for life in 1802. In 1804, he became the emperor of France. The Pope himself came to Paris to perform the crowning ceremony.

The war with England was renewed in May 1803 and this time he drew all major powers of Europe into the vortex of war. The cause was Napoleon's provocative act aimed at undermining English interests everywhere and the refusal to cede Malta. Napoleon accused Britain of violating the Treaty of Amiens and giving shelter to the émigrés and the Bourbon family. He made elaborate preparations for invading Britain herself. Although the British and the French fleets stood face to face for nearly 18 months, the French could hardly make any progress to cross the 'Ditch'. He finally abandoned the invasion of England. Napoleon was not sure about the success of his enterprise, particularly when the British navy was commanded by none other than Admiral Nelson. The French fleet was defeated a few miles off Cadiz. When Pitt resumed office as prime minister of Britain, in 1804, he formed the third coalition which included Austria and Russia with the backing of Sweden and Naples.

However, Napoleon was determined to smash this coalition. He defeated the Austrians at Ulm and forced them to surrender (October 20, 1805). Similarly, another Austrian army in Naples was overcome and it

capitulated. The Austrian emperor fled the capital, Vienna, and joined the Russian emperor. A day after the French victory at Ulm, the British under Nelson's leadership won a splendid naval victory against the combined French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar. This great British naval commander lost his life during the action. The victory at Trafalgar made the Russian emperor happy. The Russians, after joining the Austrians, moved towards meeting the French army. Napoleon engaged them at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805, and won a splendid victory. It was a glorious day in his career. Austria signed the Peace of Pressburg (December 26, 1805) and the Russians retreated. Subsequently, Napoleon met the Russian Czar at Tilsit and came to an understanding. By the Treaty of Pressburg, Napoleon received a few German states. He included them in the Confederation of the Rhine. The grand French victory at Austerlitz made Pitt remark, "Roll up that map of Europe, it will not be wanted these 10 years." Thus Napoleon brought about the subjugation of Europe under his leadership. He wanted Prussia's support but she always remained neutral. In the meantime, Napoleon sought her support for the continental system which he was to propose. When Napoleon imposed the continental system, Prussia had to support him. But when the Prussian merchant navy ships were seized by Britain, she was annoyed. Prussia quarreled with France over the promised ceding of Hanover. She declared war on France. Fighting a lone battle, she was beaten by the French at Jena and Auerstadt (Oct. 14, 1806). Napoleon reached Berlin and issued decrees to all the countries of Europe to obey the continental blockade of Britain.

## Continental System

After the defeat of Austria, Russia and Prussia, there was no one to oppose the dictates of the French emperor in Europe. The only exception was Britain. Napoleon issued Berlin and Milan decrees for imposing continental blockade of the British Isles. He did not like any European country to disobey his orders. No British ship or ships would be allowed to enter European ports, and similarly, all countries of Europe should stop their trade with England. The purpose of continental blockade was to force Britain to come to terms with France. The means adopted was to

throttle this 'nation of shopkeepers'.

However, Britain was equally prepared to meet the challenge posed by Napoleon. The British government issued Orders in Council (1807) which amounted to the blockade of all European ports by the British navy. If countries stopped their trade with Britain under French threat, then they would be unable to continue seaborne trade with the other countries. The British navy would not allow it. So to all intents and purposes, the confrontation between France and England became one of land power versus sea power. Understanding the secret clauses of the Treaty of Tilsit (July 7, 1807) between France and Russia, Britain attacked the Danish fleet and captured it before it could fall into the hands of her enemies. Thus the only hope of France to meet the threat of the British navy was lost.

To ensure the working of the continental system, France had to exercise her political control over European countries. Italy was the first to disobey, but she was subdued by the French army. Similarly, the Pope refused to obey the continental system and suffered imprisonment.

But, the French army encountered much hostility from the people of Spain. Spain revolted against Napoleon and his continental system. Her subjects were prepared to fight the French. The French army crossed the borders and entered into Spain to subdue the revolt. It encountered innumerable difficulties and finally gave up. The Spanish carried on their guerilla warfare. In the meanwhile, the British cabinet passed orders for supporting Portugal and Spain with money, materials and soldiers to win their freedom from Napoleon. The Peninsular War (1808-14), as it was known, gave Arthur Wellesley a wonderful opportunity to go to the assistance of Spain and Portugal. The war resulted in heavy casualties for the French. The Peninsular War ended in tragedy and Napoleon was to later complain of the "Spanish ulcer which killed him".

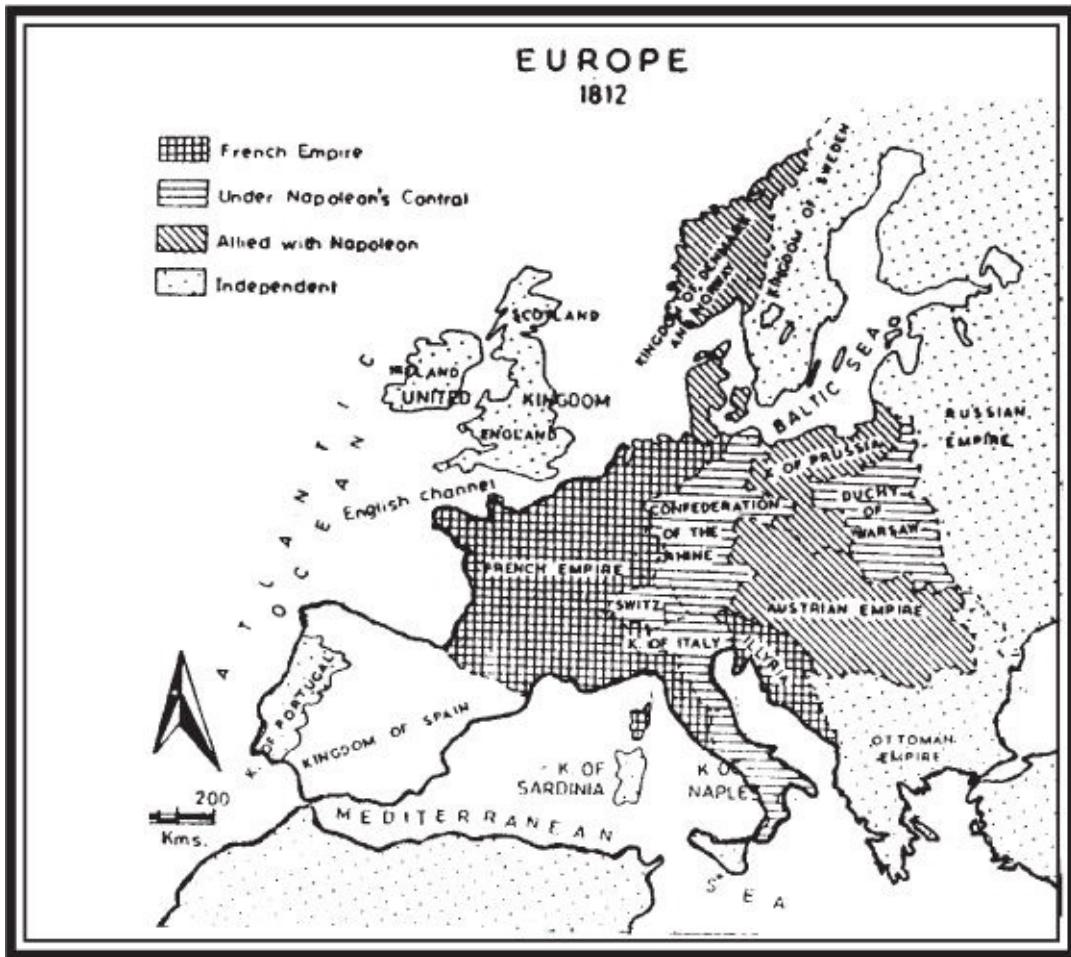
Following the Spanish revolt, other European countries revolted. When Austria revolted, Napoleon despatched a battalion of French army which defeated them at Wagram (July 1809). It was not an easy victory. He married the niece of Marie Antoinette named Marie Louise. His other allies began deserting him. The most important ally was Prince Bernadotte of Sweden (at one time the French commander working under Napoleon).

Russia also revolted against the continental system. Her economy had suffered terribly and she could not import coffee, tea, sugar and tobacco. The Russian Czar was also angry with Napoleon because of the latter's marriage with an Austrian princess. Napoleon had failed to do anything to fulfil the ambition of the Czar regarding the Balkans. He was also annoyed at the French annexation of Oldenburg which belonged to his relative. On the Czar's discontinuation of support to the continental system, Napoleon wanted to teach him a lesson. Napoleon marched at the head of the finest Grande Armée consisting of 610,000 soldiers, in 1812, to capture Moscow. He crossed the River Niemen and entered Russia. Unable to meet his threat, the Russians retreated. However, they adopted effective tactics by cutting off all supplies. The Grande Armée suffered from starvation and half of it perished. Afraid to go back, Napoleon marched on towards Moscow. He fought the Battle of Borodino (September 7, 1812). This battle cost him dearly as he lost 30,000 soldiers and several thousand horses. The casualties on the Russian side were even higher at 45,000. The Russians fled. Before leaving Moscow, they burnt it. When the French army entered the city it was totally deserted. There was no food, water or shelter for the soldiers. Napoleon realised his Himalayan blunder and ordered for the return. On his homeward journey the Russian winter set in. The soldiers suffered misfortunes one after another. At one place soldiers and horses got drowned in the semi-frozen river after the Cossacks' attack. Napoleon deserted his army to reach the capital early. Out of 610,000 soldiers, only 20,000 returned. The Russian campaign proved to be one of the greatest disasters in the history of France. However, Napoleon remained unaffected; he described the battle of Borodino as "the most beautiful battlefield I have ever seen in my life".

Napoleon reached the capital in time to reorganise his army to meet the threat posed by the great powers of Europe, particularly Prussia. It must be remembered that Napoleon had hurt their feelings very much by inflicting a crushing defeat at the battles of Jena and Auerstadt. The German writers compared Napoleon to a tyrant. German nationalism began to revive. Similarly, Napoleon's brother, being the ruler of the confederation of Rhine created trouble for the Germans. Russia, Prussia, and Austria joined together to overthrow Napoleon. Meanwhile

Napoleon's erstwhile commander, Prince Bernadotte, also joined the enemies. Britain supported Spain and Portugal to throw off their foreign yoke. Nevertheless, Napoleon remained undaunted. He raised an army of 200,000 new recruits to meet the threat. The new recruits were mostly boys who did not know how to load a rifle. The Battle of Leipzig (also known as the Battle of Nations) was fought in the middle of October 1813. The battle was furiously fought for three days and Napoleon's thrust and attacks were blunted by his enemies. They enjoyed an overwhelming military superiority. The war spread to the interior of France leading to the retreat of the French army. The allies offered Napoleon lenient terms of peace if he surrendered. However, he foolishly declined. Now, the allies were determined to see the end of his career. Realising his imminent defeat, Napoleon resigned himself to the inevitable. He surrendered. The allies accepted it. By the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau (April 11, 1814), Napoleon was offered the Mediterranean island of Elba and an annual income of 2 million francs (to be paid by France), while retaining the title of 'Emperor.' He was also allowed to maintain 400 guards for his personal security.

Thus the allies got rid of the worst troublemaker modern Europe had ever known. They restored the old Bourbon monarchy by permitting King Louis XVIII to occupy the French throne. He was to rule France according to a charter.



## Napoleon's 'Hundred Days' (March 20, 1815 - July 8, 1815)

Napoleon spent the next 10 months in the island of Elba. However, he was also watching the reactions of his enemies when the spoils were to be shared. He knew that they would quarrel. When they quarrelled, he and his followers left the island of Elba secretly (February 26, 1815) and reached the coastal town of Cannes (March 1, 1815). His Hundred Days constituted one of the most important events of his life. On his landing at the French town he encountered the royalist army. However, Napoleon showed his uncanny skill in disarming his opponents. He told the soldiers, who were sent to shoot him, that the allied powers had invited him to their parleys. He made a special appeal to the French army. Under his inspiration, it switched over its loyalty from the king to the emperor. He marched triumphantly with his army and reached the French capital,

Paris, on March 20, 1815. King Louis XVIII fled. The allies, who were negotiating at that time, were much disturbed by the news of Napoleon's takeover of France. They sank their differences to meet the threat he posed. Their armies gathered to confront Napoleon. The final battle was fought at Waterloo (in Belgium) on June 18, 1815. Napoleon fought with admirable courage but the curtain was pulled down on his fantastic military career. The English defeated him and he was forced to surrender again. He was stripped of all powers and titles. He was taken prisoner by the English and sent to the island of St. Helena. He spent the rest of his days writing his memoirs. He died in 1821.

## Causes of Napoleon's Downfall

Many traits of Napoleon's character began to manifest themselves during his career. He was inordinately ambitious and self-centred as is evident from his own statements. To remain in power and glory he always wanted to succeed, and when his plans turned sour he lost his balance. He probably did not realise the limitations imposed by God on what man can do. He wanted to achieve the impossible.

The foundation of the Napoleonic empire was based on his military organisation, control and command. The kingdoms which he built out of the conquered territories could not remain loyal to him. After all, he sent his brothers to rule over them and they were mostly inefficient.

By his great wars Napoleon generated two great forces which had hitherto remained latent among the peoples, namely, nationalism and democracy. The people who were subjected to his oppressive rule were bound to revolt. Two examples are Italy and Germany. To begin with, Italy welcomed his governance, but subsequently got disgusted with his tyranny. In the case of Germany, it responded to the call given by Stein and Hardenberg. Germany was roused to a high pitch of national feelings following the writings of some of their greatest philosophers. It was this great spirit of nationalism in Europe which brought about the downfall of Napoleon.

Napoleon's continental system may be reckoned, as the greatest blunder and may be described as a "monument of misdirected energy". Since he could not defeat Britain—which remained his indomitable foe

till the end—he resorted to throttling her economy by means of the continental blockade. He could hardly foresee the retaliatory action of Britain. Britain retaliated by her Orders-in-Council which threatened all seaborne trade of European countries which were supporting Napoleon. One by one, the countries which had obeyed his command deserted him. Spain and Russia revolted against the continental system.

The peninsular war proved disastrous to Napoleon. Subsequently, he said, that it was the “Spanish ulcer” which ruined him. Similarly, the Russian campaign of Napoleon destroyed his army. History has few parallels of this type of egregious blunders.

The role of Britain in bringing about the downfall needs to be emphasised. Napoleon showed nothing but contempt for her. He called her a “nation of shopkeepers” and the British Channel which separated it from France as a “ditch”. Without her defeat, he thought, he could not realise his dreams. It was she who formed coalitions to destroy the French Revolution. Being the “child of Revolution” he defended his country to his utmost. The role of the British navy in causing havoc upon the French fleet everywhere hardly needs emphasis. Nelson’s victory (followed by his death) in the battle of Trafalgar left Napoleon in no doubt about the supremacy of the British on the high seas.

Napoleon’s treatment of the Pope, after the latter’s refusal to obey the decrees introducing the continental system, alienated the sympathy of the Roman Catholics everywhere. They could not bear to see their spiritual leader being humiliated in such a fashion. Napoleon seized the papal territories and transferred the seat of the capital from the Vatican to Paris.

In conclusion, forces far beyond his perception were at work and destroyed his plans for the birth of the united states of Europe.

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2. Thompson, J.M., *Napoleon Bonaparte, His Rise and Fall*.
3. Thompson, D., *Europe Since Napoleon*.
4. Rose, J.H., *Napoleonic Studies*.
5. Komroff, M., *Napoleon*.

## Civilian Work of Napoleon

*I*n the words of H A L Fisher, "If the conquests of Napoleon were ephemeral, his civilian work in France was built upon granite."

Napoleon, after becoming the first consul, signed the peace of Amiens with Britain. It gave him some respite from wars. It was during this time that he introduced several reforms for which he is remembered to this day. As one may have noted that violence and disorder disturbed the political stability of France, Napoleon realised the need of the hour. He tried his best to stem this tide and establish political, social and economic stability in France. With his inexhaustible energy he set himself the task of ushering in a new era in the history of France. His plan was to replace the old institutions with the new ones thus bringing the fruits of the revolution to the people. He wanted to accomplish this task without compromising his authority.

### The Code Napoleon

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The one that merits serious attention is his Code—popularly titled after his name. Napoleon himself seems to have claimed once at the island of St. Helena, "My real glory is not my having won 40 battles. What will never be affected, what will endure for ever, is my code".

France inherited several codes of laws that were prevailing in many provinces and the Bourbon rulers did not think it fit to bring about a uniform code. What was prevailing as law in one province was not so in the other with the result that there was terrible chaos. When the revolution broke out in 1789 all these codes were abolished and listless legislations were introduced. Thus France experienced confusion worse confounded. Napoleon appointed a committee of jurists who worked

day and night to assist him in drafting what was probably the best civilian code for France. The greatness of his code lay in bringing about a "reconciliation between the old France and the new". Respect for authority and social cohesion became the characteristic features of the code without affecting individual rights and equality. Although the civil code is not exhaustive in nature, nevertheless, it laid the foundation for a civilised and modern society. What was held good in old France was harmoniously blended with the new.

The Code Napoleon provided for individual rights and duties and organised all spheres of social life and institutions. The duties of parents and children were defined. It granted religious tolerance, permitted divorce, brought about equity, provided for civil marriage, maintained sanctity of private property and subjection of women and so on. The relations between one citizen and another, and his community and a citizen towards the state were all defined clearly. The simple compact code explained the civil laws of France lucidly. What France could not achieve for centuries under Bourbon rulers, Napoleon accomplished it within a year. Thus a legal system was born in France which wielded great influence on legal systems of other European countries.

Under orders of Napoleon, the Code of Civil Procedure was also drafted. The principle of conciliation was incorporated before having a recourse to law courts. But some amendments were soon introduced to bring about speedy settlements. In the wake of the Civil Procedure Code, others such as Criminal Procedure, Penal and Commercial Codes were introduced. The last one offered many concessions to merchants and removed bottlenecks in the free flow of trade.

## **Bank of France**

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To improve the French economy and also overcome the financial stringency resulting from his wars, Napoleon founded the Bank of France. The bank became a premier financial institution regulating the national finances. Business community felt relieved at the opening of the bank because it offered them credit facilities. The bank also served the purpose of the government. In the course of time Napoleon depended upon the rich business community for financing the wars which he had

undertaken.

## Legion of Honour

One of the memorable institutions founded by Napoleon was the Legion of Honour. Napoleon realised that he rose to a very high position in France due to his own merit. Similarly, he wanted to recognise the merit of other persons who had contributed to the enrichment of French life. A large number of such people were waiting in the list. Therefore Napoleon instituted the Legion of Honour to reward such meritorious persons. This would encourage 'career open to talent'. A large number of distinguished poets, writers, artists and scientists were awarded the Legion of Honour in the court by Napoleon himself. Napoleon pinned a red ribbon and gave them a cash award. Napoleon was criticised for undermining the revolutionary principle of bringing social equality. Nevertheless, he continued to honour talented men. Many Frenchmen had fled to England for fear of life during the French revolution. Napoleon permitted them to return to France on the condition that they remain loyal to his government and shed their sympathy for the royalist cause. Some of them, in fact, returned. Feeling jealous of his growing popularity, particularly after a plebiscite, some of the émigrés plotted to kill him. The plot failed and Napoleon had them kidnapped from Germany and killed.

## Concordat (1801)

Napoleon's other reforms included the famous Concordat, an agreement with the Pope. It may be said that Napoleon was eager to establish cordial relations with the Pope. The Pope was angry during the French revolution because all the church property came to be confiscated. For some time the revolutionaries established a new religion which denied a rightful place to Catholicism in France. When he defied the decrees of the continental system, Napoleon ill-treated him. Therefore, the Pope severed his relations with the new government of France. Napoleon tried to repair the situation. He opened negotiations with the Pope. He was convinced that the people of France were staunchly Catholic, and particularly the peasants were loyal to the Pope. Napoleon realised that he would secure their loyalty if he established good relations with the

Pope. Without sacrificing much on behalf of the state, he entered into the agreement with the Pope on matters such as investiture, payment of salaries to the clergy, appointment of bishops, church laws, and so on. He permitted the Pope to appoint bishops and allowed him the right to invest them. However, he devised a new method by which the state would also have some control over the church. For example, the state would choose bishops and the Pope could invest them with the offices. They would be paid salaries by the government. One of the hardest bargains he struck with the church was about the church lands. Those lands which had been sold at the time of the revolution to the peasants would be retained by them. However, church lands which were still under state control would be restored to the Catholic Church in France. Thus, Napoleon not only restored the peasants, their religion but also allowed them to retain their lands bought during the revolutionary days. The jurors and non-jurors in France who showed their hostility towards the church also came to be appeased. As for Napoleon himself, he had no liking for religion. But he described it as "the cement of the social order". It created a sense of unity and served as a good subject of study by young women. He hoped it would turn them into obedient wives.

## Trade and Commerce

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In the field of commerce and industry, France made rapid strides of progress. As already mentioned, the Bank of France regulated the national finance. To facilitate the smooth flow of trade and commerce all bottlenecks were removed. The chamber of commerce and commercial exchange were founded. They served the business community. An advisory board was also set up to encourage manufacturers of arts and crafts. The state provided protection to the French industries from foreign competition. The French government imposed tariffs and other duties on the import of foreign goods. To encourage the sale of French products in other countries, exhibitions were held. A number of technical schools were founded in France to train students in certain crafts by offering them scholarships, prizes and loans. Due to the continental system remaining in force, France could not import many goods like sugar and coffee. But the country managed with some substitutes. France

also witnessed the industrial revolution after the invention of new cotton machines. The emperor received full support for his policies from the business community, and also during the time of war. Despite some hardships, he improved the system of taxation in France.

## Public Works

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Many public works in France stand today to remind the visitors of the achievements of Napoleon. Napoleon was fond of beautiful cities with palaces, gardens and roads. It is no surprise that he got the means of transport and communications improved through many canals, roads and bridges. He enriched the Louvre and Paris museums with rare works of art brought from Italy. The French capital received its utmost attention from the emperor. Napoleon planned a network of arterial roads radiating from the present Arc de Triomphe. He cleared the Tuileries of ugly bushes and beautified places like the Fontainebleau. It is no wonder that Paris became the most attractive and beautiful city with Napoleon's magic touch.

## Education

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Napoleon tinkered with the educational system of France. He was of the opinion that it should not be managed by private bodies such as the church. However, due to stress of war, the state allowed them to run the institutions but then it exercised control over them. He reorganised the educational system to suit the needs of time. While he neglected primary education, he patronised secondary education by allowing the communes to open secondary schools while the government ran *Lycees* (semi-military schools). The philosophy behind opening these schools was to inculcate in the young minds the loyalty to the state and also to the head of the state. Science and mathematics were also taught besides military-science. Napoleon's name came to be closely associated with the development of the University of France which consisted of 17 academies scattered in different provinces of the country.

## Reorganisation of Administration

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Napoleon left an indelible impression upon the administrative history of France by reorganising the French administrative system. Centralisation was the chief characteristic of his internal administration. A country seething with revolt and violence cannot afford to enjoy the luxury of unbridled freedom or autonomy. The efforts of previous governments had failed in curbing lawlessness and violence in the country. However, Napoleon, by successfully implementing reforms, checked the growth of violence and lawlessness. His plan of local government "became the basis of modern French system". France was divided into divisions, each having a number of departments. Napoleon introduced sub-divisions called arrondissements equivalent to old districts which had been abolished by the National Convention. In each of these units, Napoleon appointed his own officials. Thus the local council, which was constituted in each one of them after elections, had to obey the officials appointed by Napoleon. Therefore its main function became largely advisory. The prefects and sub-prefects in these units were directly controlled by Napoleon for all intents and purposes. On the one hand the facade of local autonomy was maintained, and on the other key officials administering these units were all appointed by Napoleon himself. Thus the local governments during the time of Napoleon simply became an appendage of the central government.

## Colonisation

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Napoleon's least noted achievement was in the sphere of colonisation. After the death of Louis XIV, France hardly made any attempt to establish colonies. Napoleon tried but could not follow it up. For example, he compelled Spain to cede Louisiana and then dreamed of establishing a French empire in North America. But he shelved this plan on account of his other commitments. As he was very badly in need of money to conduct his wars, he sold Louisiana territory in North America to the Government of the United States of America during the time of President Jefferson. France was able to acquire only a few islands.

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## Congress of Vienna (September 1814-June 1815)

After the downfall of Napoleon, the European statesmen were confronted with complex problems created by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic conquests. Kings who had lost their thrones put forward their claims. Similarly, those countries which were responsible for the defeat of Napoleon submitted their claims for compensation. National boundaries which were disturbed by Napoleon had to be set right. Also arose the problems of punishing France and her allies for causing havoc. After sending Napoleon to the island of Elba, the victorious allies started negotiations in Vienna in September 1814. Amidst great pomp and celebrations, the decorated Austrian capital received statesmen of Europe. Lord Castlereagh of Great Britain, Prince Von Hardenburg of Prussia, and Count Nesselrode of Russia were the first to arrive at Vienna. A few days later representatives of other nations arrived. In the course of time, Talleyrand of France too gained prominence despite France being a defeated nation. After a few days came the great monarchs, Czar Alexander I of Russia and Frederick William III of Prussia. Prince Metternich of Austria offered them wonderful hospitality and in the history of Europe the Congress became the most glittering event. In the words of C D Hazen, the Congress of Vienna remained as "One of the most important diplomatic gatherings in the history of Europe". Amidst scenes of social gaiety and personal intrigues, the deliberations started.

Within a few days, there arose serious differences over the demands put forward by Russia and Prussia and it looked as though war was

round the corner. Russia demanded large territorial gains in Poland, and similarly, Prussia claimed Saxony. However, after cooling their frayed tempers, these countries arrived at a compromise. News reached that Napoleon had left the island of Elba and may reach the French shores. After defeating Napoleon once again in the Battle of Waterloo, the allies commenced their deliberations.

It was Prince Metternich who guided the discussions during the early stages regarding territorial settlements. It was he who prescribed that two principles should govern their action in the redistribution of territories in Europe, namely, the principles of legitimacy and compensation. The rulers who had lost their kingdoms because of Napoleonic conquest should be restored to their power. Again, those nations which had been mainly instrumental in bringing about the downfall of Napoleon should be amply rewarded for their labour. Similarly, those who had helped Napoleon should be punished and their territories should be distributed among the victorious allies.

Napoleon and France were accused of causing the greatest political turmoil ever witnessed in the history of Europe. However, Talleyrand, that wily French diplomat, ably argued in defence of his country by stating that France did not cause wars, but Napoleon did. Therefore France was not the culprit and doesn't deserve punishment. Since Napoleon had been punished already, France was at peace with the rest of the world. His convincing argument overwhelmed the allies, and they agreed to restore France's old borders of 1792. Thus France was let off leniently but on condition that King Louis XVIII would govern the people of France according to a charter of freedoms. So King Louis XVIII came back to France after his short sojourn during Hundred Days of Napoleon. The allies hoped to check any ambition on the part of France (or any possible expansionist schemes of persons like Napoleon in future) by surrounding her with sufficiently powerful kingdoms. The peacemakers of the Congress of Vienna then turned their attention to examining claims of many powers and kings affected by Napoleonic wars. Russia claimed a major part of the reward for her active participation in bringing about the defeat of Napoleon. Czar Alexander I was undoubtedly a great personage in the order of merit and he claimed the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. It may be remembered that this Duchy was

created out of the parts of Poland held by Austria and Prussia (after three partitions) before Napoleon conquered it. Czar Alexander hoped to unite the Duchy of Warsaw with the part of Poland he held and rule it himself, not as emperor of Russia but as a king of Poland. In other words, the united Poland would not be merged with Russia. Russia was eager to take Finland from Sweden and Bessarabia from the Turks. With this Russia hoped to expand her dominions on both sides, westwards and south-eastwards.

However, Prussia was not willing to part with her slice of Poland unless she was compensated elsewhere. She cast her covetous glance on the rich Kingdom of Saxony in the south with its chief cities of Leipzig and Dresden. What would happen to the king of Saxony? It was decided that he should be treated as a traitor because he stood by "his treaty obligation with Napoleon down to the battle of Leipzig". These demands of Russia and Prussia provoked Austria and Britain and it looked as though the rival parties would settle their dispute by means of war. It was this possible flare-up which made Napoleon to return from Elba. His triumphant return to France compelled his opponents to sink their differences and form the united front for his defeat. A compromise was brought about by which Russia received a major part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and Prussia the province of Posen and the city of Cracow. The king of Saxony retained his kingdom along with Leipzig and Dresden, but on the condition that he would part with two-fifths of his kingdom to the allies. Prussia received territories on both the banks of the River Rhine, and also Pomerania from Sweden.

Austria retained her Polish possessions. She acquired northern Italy (Lombardy and Venetia) as compensation for her loss of the Netherlands to Holland. She also got the Illyrian province along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. Again, she was to look after the union of German states – the German Diet. Thus Austria's population and influence grew in Central Europe. By any standard it was no mean achievement on the part of Prince Metternich.

Britain, which was mainly responsible for the downfall of Napoleon, retained what she had conquered from France and her dependency, Holland. She got Malta, Ionian Islands, Cape Colony, Ceylon and a part of West Indies. With this her empire expanded overseas. She also got

Heligoland (in the North Sea). In fact, she became the mistress of the Mediterranean Sea. Holland, which had lost Ceylon, was compensated with the acquisition of Belgium, a country which had supported Napoleon.

Prince Metternich envisaged Italy to remain as a mere 'geographic expression'. Her states were parcelled out among powers with the exception of the kingdom of Piedmont and the Papal States. The northern states, Lombardy and Venetia, were handed over to Austria, and the Duchies of Tuscany and Modena to the princes of Austrian imperial family. The Duchy of Parma was given to Marie Louise, wife of Napoleon. The Papal States came under the control of the Pope. The southern states, Naples and Sicily, were assigned to the Spanish Bourbon monarchy.

The other changes included the annexation of Norway (which belonged to Denmark) to Sweden. It was a prize offered to Prince Bernadotte (the rebel commander of Napoleon) for his cooperation in switching over his loyalty from his master to the allied cause. Switzerland increased in size due to the addition of three more cantons, taken out from the territory of France. The borders of Spain and Portugal remained the same.

Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine was disbanded but the Holy Roman Empire was not revived. Instead, the peacemakers created a loose confederation of thirty-eight states. They called it the German confederation and set up a Diet. The thirty-eight German rulers sent their personal representatives to the German Diet which was presided over by the Austrian representative. There, they discussed their common problems. Thus, Austria was left in charge of looking after all the German states. As a result she became very powerful in Central Europe.

## A Critical Appraisal

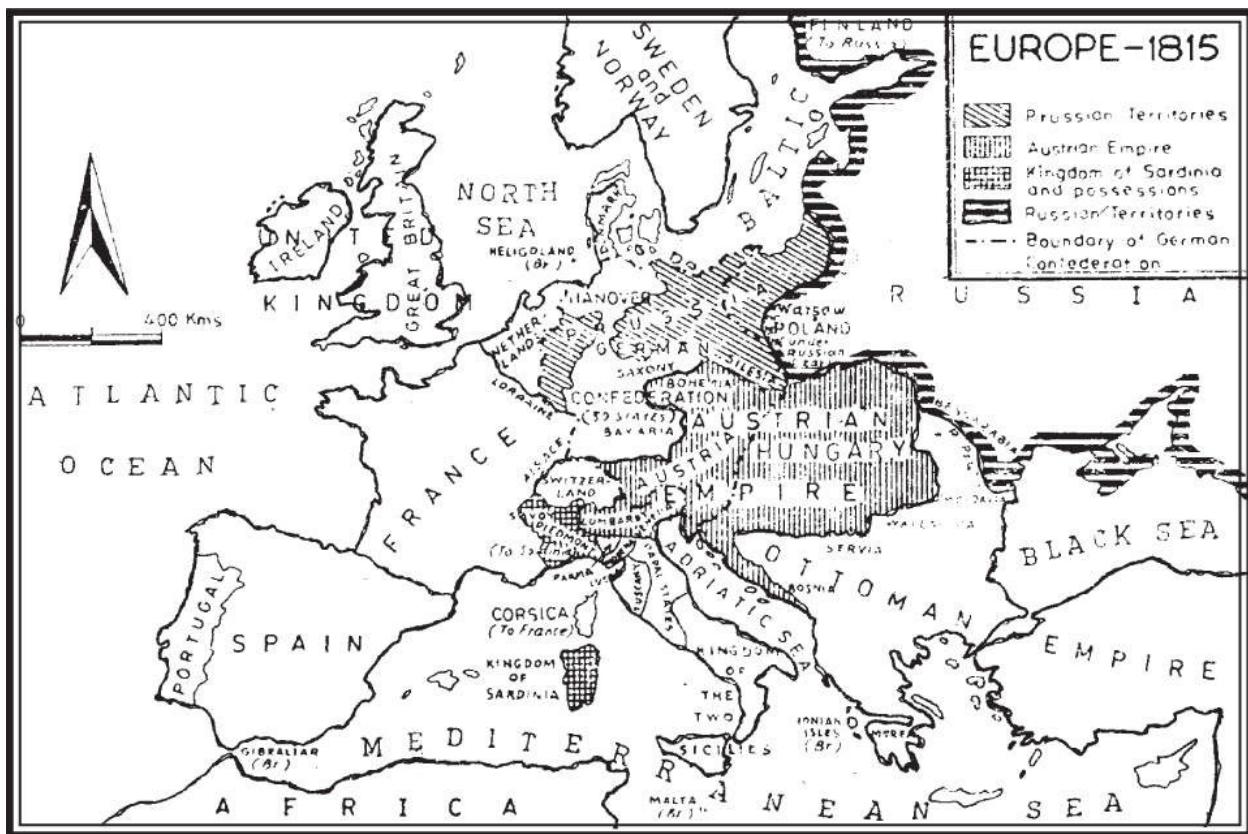
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The reconstruction of the map of Europe based on the principles of legitimacy and compensation was set at nought by force of circumstances before the end of the nineteenth century. The territorial settlements made by the Congress of Vienna could not remain permanent.

Firstly, the peacemakers committed the same blunder as Napoleon by

creating those very forces which brought about his downfall. Those forces were nationalism and democracy. Since the revolution of 1789 in France, the people of Europe looked forward to the days of constitutional monarchy. So long as a constitution, a Parliament and voting rights were denied to them, they were to take up the cudgels against tyrannical rules.

Secondly, the peacemakers ignored the sentiments of the people living in Belgium, Norway, Italy and the German states. These unfortunate states became mere pawns in the hands of diplomats. How could a Catholic Belgium tolerate the rule of the Protestant Dutch king? Similarly, how could Lombards (Italians) subject themselves to the rule of Austria? How could Norway acquiesce its merger with Sweden? About the Poles, the less said the better. Their country had been partitioned thrice during the eighteenth century. The Russian Czar was dreaming of ruling her as king. The statesmen who reshaped the map of Europe used lofty phrases and ideas to sway the sensibilities of the people of Europe such as "the reconstruction of the social order", "the regeneration of the political system of Europe", "a durable peace based upon a just division of power". However, the liberals in Europe could see through the vicious minds of the so-called statesmen who were determined to enslave the peoples of Europe with their new philosophy. Therefore, the territorial settlement did not last for more than half a century. Cracks began to appear in the fabric of the Vienna settlement as early as 1821 with the Greek war of independence. Similarly, the subjects in Italy and Germany rose frequently in revolt to liberate their countries from the domination of Austria. Although, the victorious allies established the concert of Europe with the purpose of safeguarding the Vienna settlement, nevertheless, national movements broke out everywhere to destroy it. The statesmen who met at Vienna were taught a lesson not to trample upon the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of Europe.



Lastly, the peacemakers at Vienna were no more than the "Congress of aristocrats". An aristocrat among aristocrats was Metternich to whom democracy and nationalism appeared to be anathema. He considered it dangerous to grant freedom to the people. To him revolutions were synonymous with evil that had to be wiped out mercilessly. He launched a crusade against all liberal tendencies with the help of other reactionary rulers of Europe. He oppressed the liberals who were demanding constitution and Parliament. Ultimately, Metternich declared that democracy could only "change daylight into darkest night", and the ideas of the French Revolution as "the volcano which must be extinguished". This staunch reactionary was himself swept away by the torrents of the 1848 revolution.

While the peacemakers were bent upon reinstating former reactionary rulers to their respective positions, and compensating themselves with some territories here and there, they did not lose sight of the most pressing problem—the maintenance of peace. They accomplished that object admirably well. They sustained peace for nearly half a century. With the exception of the Crimean War, Europe was not

disturbed for the next 60 years.

The Concert of Europe was the first major attempt made by European statesmen to establish an international organisation for maintenance of peace and security. The big four (Russia, Austria, Prussia and Britain) established the Concert of Europe which offered protection to the rulers of Europe from the revolts and revolutions. In the Concert of Europe is seen the germ of the future League of Nations. It may be said that the Concert of Europe was the forerunner of the League of Nations which was established in the early part of the twentieth century. It was their earnest desire to maintain peace and not the means they adopted which should sway our judgement of their actions.

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## Congress System Under Metternich

*P*rince Metternich dominated the political scene of Europe for the next thirty-five years (1815-1848). Called the 'The Era of Metternich', the system he founded also came to be known by his name. Prince Clemens Von Metternich came from a respectable noble family. He was born in 1773, and at a very young age joined the diplomatic service. He gained valuable experience during this time which involved his transfer from one capital to another. He became a master in political intrigues; and after noting his brilliant qualities the Austrian Emperor appointed him the foreign minister in 1809. To many liberals of Europe he became a symbol and champion of "autocracy, reaction and the police state". To Metternich the outbreak of the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic era meant shaking the very foundation of monarchies of Europe— Austrian Empire, being particularly vulnerable due to its multi-racial and multinational composition—and unless this drift was stemmed in time, the whole of Europe would face endless anarchy.

It was to safeguard the interests of not only his country and its ruling monarchy but also of others that he worked hard towards restoring the status quo. In the art of diplomacy he had no equal. His vanity and intrigues perplexed many. He once declared, "My position has this peculiarity ... that all eyes, all expectations, are directed to precisely that point where I happen to be". With a very strong conviction that monarchies should be saved from the impending dangers of revolts and revolutions, he convened a European Congress of diplomats in Vienna. It was in the famous Congress of Vienna that he played a dynamic role of a mediator as claims by rulers conflicted with one another. It was he who persuaded the diplomats assembled at the Congress of Vienna to accept

the principles of legitimacy and compensation on the basis of which claims could be settled. Many disputes and conflicting claims came to be settled through his subtle give and take. Once the settlements were reached he paid attention to the safeguarding of Europe from further political turmoils. Hence the evolution of the Congress System.

Its origin began with the Holy and Quadruple Alliances. The former was not a military alliance but a league of sovereigns wedded to the principle of Christian ethic, that was to treat the subjects with love and kindness. As Christian rulers, they had obligations to discharge for the welfare of their respective subjects. The father of the Holy Alliance was Czar Alexander I who had strong religious impulses. He was influenced to a certain extent by Jeremy Bentham, the famous English reformer, who introduced the idea of 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Until 1819, Czar Alexander was also much influenced by his Swiss tutor, Laharpe, a disciple of Rousseau. Although the Holy Alliance was taken up seriously by the Czar, it had nothing tangible to offer. Out of respect for the Czar, many diplomats signed, with few exceptions. British statesman, Castlereagh, contemptuously termed it a "piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense". Metternich described it as "a loud sounding nothing". Castlereagh did not approve of the Holy Alliance because accepting it would mean a crusade against liberalism; or implied intervention in the domestic affairs of the countries. The Holy Alliance is sometimes confused with having brought into being the 'Concert of Europe'. It was not so. It was in fact founded by the Quadruple Alliance signed on November 20, 1815, by Russia, Austria, Prussia and Britain. The contracting parties agreed to hold congresses from time to time during the next 20 years to discuss problems of common interests and needs of European rulers. The members agreed to act jointly, if necessary, in defence of the settlements made at the Congress of Vienna. Although the idea of four sovereigns of Europe coming together to maintain peace (smacked of dictatorial tendencies) was originally that of British Foreign Minister, Castlereagh, it was subsequently used as a tool of oppression by Prince Metternich. Castlereagh hoped that through this alliance he could maintain the balance of power in Europe, but unfortunately, it was misused by the shrewd Austrian Chancellor. Subsequently, Britain was to disclaim her part in it and leave it for ever.

## Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle (1818)

In 1818 France had discharged her obligations by paying the indemnity imposed on her fully, and therefore sought a new status. Accordingly, the Congress met at Aix-la-Chapelle and decided to withdraw the army from France. The powers agreed to extend invitation to France to join them in their endeavour to maintain peace in Europe. Accordingly, France joined the Concert of Europe. The other agreements concerned with the Swedish debt to Denmark, on the treatment to be meted out to Napoleon Bonaparte in St. Helena, the British claim to a salute on the British Channel. The Congress powers could not agree on other items on the agenda such as the joint expedition to be launched against the Barbary pirates. Russia and Prussia insisted on other powers of the Quadruple Alliance to extend a guarantee for protection of the Quadruple Alliance to extend a guarantee for protection of not only the borders established by the Congress of Vienna but also of the existing governments. In other words, the members of the Quadruple Alliance would have to intervene if any of those governments were toppled. There was considerable disagreement on this issue because Castlereagh argued that it would be immoral to extend support to existing governments if they abused their powers. Prussia even went to the extent of demanding the maintenance of an international force at Brussels for the purpose of offering protection to the existing governments against internal revolts and revolutions. Castlereagh, coming under the influence of Canning, made it clear that Carlsbad decree was calculated to interfere in the internal affairs of German states by Austria and therefore, he would have nothing to do with it. In the case of former Spanish American colonies, Castlereagh did not like the power's proposal to bring about their reunion with Spain for commercial reasons. Britain had established close trade links with South American colonies and was not prepared to see their union with the former master unless the power of the Alliance gave clear guarantee of safeguarding her interests. The British Government led by Canning was equally eager not to commit itself or embroil itself in the affairs of the continent unnecessarily. The era of "splendid isolationism" was being ushered in. The Congress broke up

to meet again when circumstances warranted.

## Political Unrest in Europe

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Although the peacemakers eagerly looked forward to a period of tranquillity, their hopes were belied. In 1820, they were rudely disturbed by revolts in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany and even in Britain. In Spain, the people revolted against the tyranny of the Bourbon ruler. They succeeded in forcing their ruler to grant the same constitution which had been withdrawn in 1812. Portugal witnessed another revolution. The Spanish colonies in South America also, after a comparative peace, revolted at the attempts of the Spanish king to foist his rule again. The Spanish Bourbon ruler, who was ruling Naples and Sicily in Italy, found himself unable to contain the revolution in his territory. Other parts of Italy were also affected due to outbreak of revolutions. These revolutions alarmed Metternich and the Czar, the former especially with revolutions in Italy which seemed to threaten Austrian domination, and the latter with 'Jacobinism' in Spain. Therefore, the second congress of the powers was held at Troppau in 1820.

## Congress of Troppau (1820) and Laibach (1821)

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All the representatives of Quadruple Alliance (now Quintuple) condemned the revolutions with one voice. However, they did not arrive at a common decision regarding the steps to be taken to contain them. Russia offered her services by sending troops to Spain to suppress the Spanish 'Jacobinism' and restore full authority to the king. But Metternich was suspicious of the intentions of Russia, despite his hatred towards revolutions. He thought that Russia, if allowed to send her troops, would take advantage of this opportunity to aggrandise herself. Similarly, France was afraid of Russian demonstration of power in a neighbouring country, Spain. However, the Congress of Troppau was convened to deal with the Italian revolution in Naples. But France and Russia did not like Austria to interfere in Naples alone. The Congress powers discussed the general principles that should guide their action if

revolutions broke out in member countries or country and also the duties of other members. All these principles were embodied in the Troppau Protocol which was signed by the three Eastern powers (Prussia, Austria and Russia). They openly justified the interventionist policy of the Congress. Castlereagh tried to reduce the scope of intervention by laying down certain stipulations. The outcome of the Laibach Congress was that Austria was allowed to take deterrent action against the people of Naples by sending her troops. The revolt was put down mercilessly and the king was restored to his full authority after the withdrawal of the constitution. In the meantime, Czar Alexander I, a liberal, was converted into an arch reactionary, due to the influence of Metternich. The 'Liberal phase' of his career ended when he upheld Metternich's policy of intervention when the Austrian troops marched towards Naples to put down the revolt, some liberals in Piedmont tried to attack from the rear. But the plan did not succeed and the liberal phase in Piedmont ended. King Victor Emmanuel I of Sardinia had to abdicate his throne in favour of Charles Felix.

It may be said that in the Congress at Laibach, Metternich reached the acme of glory due to his diplomatic skill par excellence. With the exception of Britain, he had persuaded all the diplomats to agree to his point of view. He brazenly advocated a policy of intervention, even by the use of force, to stem the tide of revolutions and revolts. However, a serious crack appeared in the Congress system with Britain withdrawing herself from active support to the Quadruple (now Quintuple) Alliance. Britain drove the first nail into the coffin of Congress system.

## Congress of Verona (1822)

The last Congress was held at Verona where the powers were confronted by two serious issues—the Greek war of independence and the Spanish revolt. Before the Congress of Verona met, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, who had overstrained himself with heavy work, committed suicide. Before his tragic death he had left "instructions", and George Canning who succeeded him, was able to carry them out. Britain did not intend to send any representative to the Congress, but on the advice of the king, revised her stand. King George IV was interested in

the Greek question, which was coming up before the Congress of Verona.

The Greeks revolted against the Turkish master in 1821 and the war of independence was continuing with Turkish troops trying to suppress it. Russia, which always considered any Balkan issue as a part of her politics, immediately proposed that her troops should be sent to intervene. But the shrewd Metternich was not prepared to allow her since Russia was always a rival of Austria in the Balkans. Britain, represented by Wellington, also resented Russia's proposal for the same reason. Riddled with so many enigmas, the Greek question was adroitly dropped from the agenda and the next issue, the Spanish Revolution was taken up.

The crunch came when France, after receiving a distress signal from King Ferdinand IV, troubled by the revolt in his kingdom, proposed that her army be despatched to help the Spanish king. Her proposal was supported by Austria, Russia and Prussia. Under instructions from Canning, the Duke of Wellington insisted upon "a rigid abstinence from any interference in the internal affairs of Spain to suppress the revolt. Upon the rejection of her point of view, Britain withdrew from the Concert of Europe, thereby driving the final nail into the coffin of the Congress system. Thus there remained only the 'Three Gentlemen of Verona' who tried to preserve peace to subserve their interests.

## Failure of the Congress System

It is not difficult to trace the causes which brought about the failure of the Concert of Europe. It may be said that the intention of the powers joining the Quadruple Alliance was to create a front against the old enemy, France. They were afraid that France may rise once again and threaten the peace of Europe by destroying the settlements they had brought about in the Congress of Vienna. Since there was no possibility of such things happening again, to that extent their alliance weakened.

The principle of allied intervention in the domestic affairs of countries other than France was a deviation from its original pact. Although Britain gave its tacit consent to the protocol of the Congress of Troppau, she never meant that the Congress system should suppress the legitimate aspirations of peace-loving people. She agreed only for its limited

application. However, Metternich adroitly used the Congress system to subserve the selfish interests of the members. Britain's vehement stand in contrast to Metternich's views in the Congress of Troppau, to some extent, brought about its decline.

Lord Canning, who had none of the enthusiasm of Castlereagh for the Congress system undoubtedly brought about its extinction. The issue was clinched when Wellington stoutly opposed in the Congress of Verona (1822) a Russian proposal to send her troops to the Balkans to settle the Greek question, and France offering her services to the Spanish king to suppress the revolt in his kingdom. On the latter issue, Britain's stand remained firm. When her contention was rejected Canning pulled Britain out of the Alliance.

It is also true that mutual jealousies among the powers brought about the downfall of the Congress system. For example, while Russia was prepared to send troops to Spain to quell the revolt, Austria staved off the issue. Similarly, when Naples revolted, Austria was very much concerned. She wanted a free hand to suppress the revolt there. Again when Russia was ready to send troops to the Balkans on the Greek question, Austria would have none of it.

Finally, events in Europe cast a shadow on the success of the Congress system. The success of revolutions destroyed the very fabric the Congress of Vienna had woven.

Among the points in favour of Congress, one can say that a half-hearted attempt was made to create an international organisation to maintain peace.

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1. A Albrecht-Camie, *A Diplomatic History of Europe since the Congress of Vienna*.
2. Webster C.K., *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*.
3. Marriot J.A.R., *Castlereagh*.
4. Seton-Watson R.W., *Britain in Europe*.

## French Monarchy after 1815

The allies enthroned the brother of the executed French king, Louis XVI, after Napoleon abdicated, by the Treaty of Fontainebleau (April 11, 1814). The new ruler of France assumed the title of Louis XVIII and wisely decided to rule according to a constitutional charter which provided for a parliamentary government, personal liberty and equality, religious toleration and a free press. On May 30, 1814, the Treaty of Paris was signed by France and she gave up all the territories added by Napoleonic conquests. Despite this loss France did not suffer as the allies left her with boundaries as existed in 1792. Even before the completion of a full year by the new French government, it was rudely interrupted by the sudden appearance of Napoleon who returned from the island of Elba. The French king fled and Napoleon regained control of France and prepared to challenge his enemies in the Battle of Waterloo. With depleted military strength, Napoleon heroically fought his enemies but without success. He was defeated. He surrendered to the English who sent him to the island of Saint Helena (1815) to spend the rest of his life as a British prisoner.

The Allies restored King Louis XVIII to his throne and his reign concluded in 1824. During the nine years of his rule the king tried to steer a middle course by avoiding the pitfalls. He found it difficult to bring about a compromise between opposing factions. The Ultra-royalists who dominated the first chamber urged him to return to the *ancien régime* hoping to regain their position and privileges. They were determined to persecute all the Bonapartists in the country. They organised a "White Terror" in 1816 and apprehended about 7,000 supporters of Napoleon. They were imprisoned and most of them were subsequently executed

including Marshal Ney, the bravest of the brave. Except for this ruthless savagery, his reign was peaceful. His government did much to collect the war indemnity to pay off the Allies and thereby got rid of the foreign troops occupying French soil. In the meanwhile, France was restored to its position and rank in the comity of nations of Europe, and her assistance was sought to restore the absolute rule of King Ferdinand of Spain.

It may be said in conclusion that the reign of King Louis XVIII began with an emphasis on the policy of moderation but during the closing years, it deteriorated into a reactionary rule. With his death ended the short phase of moderate policy of the French government.

As Louis XVIII was childless, his brother Count of Artois succeeded to the French throne with the title Charles X. The new king was strict and autocratic in contrast to "his pleasant, easygoing brother". He favoured the influence of the clergy in political matters. Unfortunately, he lacked shrewdness and foresight, qualities which bring success to the ruler of a troubled State. Being a strong reactionary he totally opposed the liberal tendencies of his brother. Declaring his contempt for the constitutional monarchy he said, "I would rather chop wood, than reign after the fashion of the King of England". He sought to impose his will on the nation and worked for the restoration of *ancien régime*. The people of his country were amused at the way their new king was "crowned after the ancient rites of Rheims". While he lay prostrate he was anointed—seven parts of his body were pricked with a golden needle which was dipped in sacred oil. Considering himself a holy person endowed with magical powers he visited hospitals to heal the patients with his holy touch.

His clerical attitude became evident as can be seen in his first few acts. Laws were passed making sacrilege punishable by death. Religious orders which ceased their activities during the revolution were encouraged to function. The new king was also found taking part in religious procession carrying a lighted candle like others. All these acts irritated his opponents. To top it all, the new king granted a billion francs as compensation to the nobles who suffered losses due to the revolution. In 1827, all books, journals and newspapers were asked to conform to the code of censorship. The National Guard was disbanded. When there was a storm of protest from the liberals and Bonapartists, he reacted

sternly by dismissing his moderate councillors and appointing Prince de Polignac as his prime minister. People suspected whether the king was thinking of attempting a coup to overthrow the constitution and restore the much hated *ancien régime*.

Polignac represented the most reactionary group France had ever witnessed. On assuming office, he desired to reorganise the French society based on the model of *ancien régime*. Besides being an Ultra of the worst kind, he was reportedly receiving direct instructions from the Virgin Mary herself. The programme of the Ultras kept pace and the people were alarmed.

Thus the policies of the king and his Chief Minister, Polignac, provoked the Chamber of Deputies who protested. The Chamber demanded the dismissal of Polignac's ministry and the king dissolved it and ordered elections. In this atmosphere of acrimony France's success in the Near East (1827) and her conquest of Algiers (1830) were relegated to the background. The king continued to ride roughshod by implementing the programme of the Ultras.

## July Ordinances

As per the advice of Polignac he issued four ordinances from the Royal Palace of St. Cloud on July 25, 1830. Among other things, the July Ordinances included the suspension of the liberty of the press, dissolution of the new Chamber of Deputies even before it met, change of electoral system (which reduced the strength of the voters from 100,000 to 25,000) and an order for new elections. In other words, the king strongly desired the return of royal absolutism of the pre-revolutionary days. So during the next two days tension mounted, making it inevitable for the outbreak of another revolution.

The king's July Ordinances posed a challenge to the people of France in general, and to the citizens of Paris in particular. The lead to give an effective response came from 41 journalists led by Thiers and Mignet. They drafted a letter of protest and challenged the validity of ordinances. Furthermore, they appealed to the people of Paris to resist the attempts of the king to foist on them the old royal despotism. On July 27, only two newspapers, *National* and *Temps*, dared to print the protest-letter. The

citizens of Paris did not lag behind. Revolutionary committees were formed in many arrondissements and their members started collecting arms and erected barricades on the streets of Paris to fight the royal tyranny. Polignac entrusted the work of protecting the city to Marshal Marmont who deployed his troops to demolish the barricades. There was some street-fighting and bloodshed but the king was not alarmed. Next day the Paris mob went on rampage and shouted "down with Bourbon monarchy". They raised the tricolour and laid siege to the Hotel de Ville. In the meanwhile, the old members of the National Guard joined the mob. Subsequently, the mob attacked the bakery and the regular troops starved. They also mutinied. The king was complacent because his minister Polignac, had said that he had seen a vision that four men and one corporal would settle the whole thing. But when his regular troops mutinied and the vision of Polignac did not materialise, he became frightened. He remembered the warning to his dying brother (King Louis XVIII), that was, "Do not forget that you must preserve the throne for your son and grandson". To save his throne for his children he offered to withdraw the obnoxious ordinances.

It was too late and the Paris mob was not in a mood to accept this offer. In the face of this opposition he abdicated his throne in favour of his grandson, Comte de Chambord. It was about this time the mob attacked the Tuileries and the Louvre. The insurgents hoped to establish a Republic but Thiers and Talleyrand, an enlightened clergyman, felt that such a move would invite the wrath of reactionary states, and there would be military intervention. Hence, they put forward the name of Louis Philippe, then Duke of Orleans (collateral line of Bourbon House) as Charles' successor.

Early on the morning of July 30, 1830, the announcement was made through banners and placards. Louis Philippe was invested with the title of Lieutenant General of the kingdom. When he reached the Hotel de Ville he was warmly received by Laffitte a banker. The Legislature met and formally confirmed his title, "King of the French by the will of the people", in contrast to Charles' title, "King of the French by the grace of God". Many called him 'citizen king' on account of the simple life he led. The divine right of kingship was totally rejected by the people. By giving consent to the offer made, Louis Philippe agreed to rule the kingdom

according to the constitution. He also accepted the tricolour flag to indicate his rejection of royal absolutism.

Louis Philippe was the son of Philippe Egalite. The latter belonged to the younger branch of Bourbon line and at the time of the French Revolution had given his consent to the execution of King Louis XVI. Thiers and Talleyrand hoped that Louis Philippe had enough credentials to occupy the French throne. His candidature would have special appeal to the wealthy middle-class sections of French society. He would be acceptable to the common people since he did not have aristocratic habits like his predecessors. He accepted to rule according to a revised charter which abolished his powers to issue ordinances.

## **Orleans Monarchy in France (1830-48)**

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Although the new king was “clever, sensible, kindly and well-intentioned”, he was yet to make a mark. His simple life style and habits did not impress many. On the other hand, he became a butt of ridicule. The royalists hated him because he had usurped the French throne from his Bourbon cousin. The Republicans were disenchanted because his government was not democratic in the strict sense of the term. A majority of French population was yet to secure the right to vote. At the most his government could be described as “an aristocratic creation with a democratic appearance”. The Bonapartists did not like him because his foreign policy had none of the trappings of Napoleonic splendour. The Socialists too were unsympathetic because he had not made any effort to improve the working class conditions.

## **Foreign Policy**

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The first problem King Louis Philippe faced in foreign relations was of securing recognition to his government from his European counterparts. They were annoyed with the French because they had dethroned Charles X and enthroned a new ruler. Czar Nicholas I was tempted to intervene on behalf of Charles X but then he was too busy suppressing the Polish revolt. King Louis Philippe made efforts to improve his image in the eyes of other European rulers by allaying their fears. He was successful in securing recognition for his government from the new British foreign

secretary, Lord Palmerston. However, in accomplishing this task, he had to lose a few opportunities by which he would have secured a lot of goodwill from various sections of his own subjects.

## Belgian War of Independence (1830–31)

One such opportunity was lost when the Belgians revolted against the Dutch rule. The Congress of Vienna had, through its decision, brought about the merger of Belgium with Holland. The Belgians and the Dutch differed in their religion and language. The Dutch occupied all important positions in the administration. Six out of seven cabinet ministers were Dutch. Similarly, out of 39 ambassadors, 30 were Dutch. All military generals in the army were Dutch. Many Belgian members of Parliament were also acting as officials, and therefore did not speak boldly about their grievances for fear of losing their jobs. Many laws which were passed favoured the Dutch. The Dutch preferred free trade.

In course of time, the Belgians sent petitions revealing Dutch injustice in Belgium. Press-censorship imposed on the Belgians, added insult to injury. What prompted the Belgians to revolt was the July revolution in France and a few instances of high-handed actions by the Dutch king. The revolt began in Brussels which soon spread to other Belgian towns and the Dutch army was unable to contain this situation. A National Congress was set up in Belgium which declared independence from Dutch control and voted for the election of a new constitutional monarch and two houses of Parliament.

The problem which confronted the French King Louis Philippe was whether he would accept the *fait accompli* or not. In his country there was tremendous enthusiasm on the part of the people in urging his government to go to the support of Belgians in their hour of crisis. The king had some awkward moments. However, the situation eased when in the conference in London, the other powers agreed to recognise Belgian independence and neutrality on certain conditions. These conditions were wholly unacceptable to the Belgians, therefore they rejected them. They offered the second son of King Louis Philippe the crown of Belgium. Unfortunately, King Louis Philippe could not rise to the occasion. He knew well that if his son accepted the crown there

would be a war. France was not yet prepared for such an eventuality. Therefore he promptly rejected the Belgian offer and defused the tense situation.

Britain then came forward with her candidate, namely, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. Belgians, therefore, left with no choice, agreed to make him their ruler. The whole affair made the French bitter. They felt that Britain's Palmerston had played a trick or outmanoeuvred their king into accepting a compromise. Similarly, in Poland there was a revolt, and the Poles expected the French to assist them to throw off their foreign yoke. Though the French people were sympathetic, their government did nothing and the Polish revolt was brutally suppressed by Russia. To the French, who were brought up on Napoleonic glory, the pacifist policy followed by their king appeared subservient to the cause of British interests.

In 1840, France was presented with another opportunity to play a role worthy of her status. Mohmet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt felt slighted when his master, the Sultan of Turkey, did not compensate him properly for his assistance rendered to him during the Greek war of independence. He carried everything before him and conquered Syria. He even threatened to attack Constantinople. The enthusiasm of the French people regarding his great military achievements rose high. Even the king felt that he should help Mohmet Ali in all possible ways. Thiers was appointed head of the ministry to champion the cause of Mohmet Ali. But the king, himself in charge of foreign policy, did not give a free hand to Thiers for fear of embroiling France in another European war, since the other powers of Europe had warned Mohmet Ali to give up his hostile acts against the Sultan. When Thiers disagreed with the king, he was dismissed. Guizot was appointed in his place. The lacklustre foreign policy of the king disgusted many a politician. A deputy exclaimed in 1847, "What have they done for the past seven years? Nothing, nothing, nothing." Lamartine complained that "France is becoming bored."

There are other factors, besides the foreign policy of the king, which precipitated the downfall of Orleans monarchy in 1848. The rise of socialism in the wake of industrial revolution in France created problems for the government. Guizot's ministry was conservative in character and the government rested on the bourgeoisie support for its survival. It

resisted the progressive movements of the socialists which was directed to improve the conditions of workers, and thus alienated the sympathy of the working class. The grievances of the workers also attracted the attention of the Republicans and they began to demand social, electoral and parliamentary reforms. It was on the issue of these demands that the Orleans monarchy met its doom.

## **Electoral and Parliamentary Reforms**

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The demand for electoral reforms came from the working classes. It was they who had fought the soldiers of King Charles X and brought about a revolution. They now found that all the advantages were reaped by the rich middle class (bourgeoisie), and in the midst of prosperity they had to live in poverty. With the exception of few laws which referred to elementary education to be provided for children, and factory act regulating child labour, Guizot's ministry did not do much to mitigate the sufferings of labourers. France was undergoing the worst effects of industrial revolution. The workers formed trade unions and agitated for improving their conditions through strikes, which the government crushed. It suppressed trade unions and political clubs.

It was in these circumstances, that a few intellectuals and writers argued for electoral, social and economic reforms. The Republicans and Socialists demanded universal suffrage. Louis Blanc (1811-1882), a socialist who wrote *Organisation of Labour* in 1839, advocated universal suffrage as a first step towards bringing about a socialist State. He also favoured the idea of having National Workshops to solve unemployment problem. The other socialist writers of the period were Saint Simon and Fourier who exercised some influence on the minds of the masses.

As the king and his prime minister were totally opposed to any reform the opposition parties got united for the first time and demanded for electoral reforms in 1847. In response to their clamour the king said, "There will be no reform; I do not wish it. If deputies vote it, the peers will veto it, and even if the peers should favour it my veto still remains". Between July and December 1847, a large number of banquets were held giving opportunities to speakers to advocate reforms publicly. The opposition parties planned to hold a big banquet in Paris on February 22,

1848 and invited 170,000 guests to participate. Guizot immediately took necessary steps and forbade the opposition parties from holding it. They agreed but the news of cancellation reached too late. As a result thousands came to Paris on February 22, and crowds were seen on all the streets chanting, "Down with Guizot! Long live Reform!" The same evening the situation became tense after mobs plundered gunshops and erected barricades. The National Guard was ordered to quell the revolt but they joined the insurgents. Next day there was street fighting between mobs supported by National Guards and regular troops. The king dismissed Guizot in order to pacify the mob of Paris. But in the evening the mob surrounded Guizot's house. The guards protecting him fired at the crowd resulting in death and injury to 52 persons. The crowd paraded the corpses on the streets inciting the people to take revenge. A large crowd collected at the Tuileries and the king could see clearly the writing on the wall. He abdicated the throne in favour of his grandson and secretly left France for England.

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1. Artz, F.B., *Reaction and Revolution 1814-1832*.
2. —., *France under the Bourbon Restoration*.
3. Leys, M.D.R., *Between the Two Empires*.

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## Revolts in Central Europe

*T*he news of the downfall of King Louis Philippe of France in 1848 sent tremors throughout Europe. His fall seemed to prophesy the end of an era and the beginning of another. Over the political firmament of Europe a revolutionary spirit pervaded, like the one that was witnessed during the French Revolution of 1789, and Napoleonic wars. Nationalism and liberalism triumphed everywhere and the Metternich era was coming to an end. Revolutions broke out in the regions lying between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Mediterranean in the south, and from the French borders to the Russian. Of all the political upheavals, the one in Austria seemed to be the most severe. Metternich, that arch reactionary, who dominated the political scene of Europe ever since the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte made good his escape from his native land. He fled and settled in England. Let us examine the factors which brought about a revolution in Austria.

It may be remembered that Austria grew into congeries of states as it expanded with new acquisitions. It did not develop into a nation for her dominions comprised 13 different races. Ever since its expansion under King Rudolf I during the thirteenth century, the multi-racial and multilingual people maintained their identity, and unfortunately, they were not welded into a homogeneous nation. With nationalism and liberalism sweeping over the continent during the nineteenth century, the centrifugal forces began to operate. Therefore, the Habsburg monarchy faced a threat to its very survival for the first time in the nineteenth century.

Metternich realised how delicate the structure of the Austrian Empire was and how it was threatened by waves of nationalism and liberalism

let loose by the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Therefore he came to the conclusion that his empire should stand as “the conservative barrier to all the progressive movements in Europe”. He could think of no other means by which he could save the Austrian Empire. Unfortunately, his conservative and reactionary policies built into a system known by his name could hardly stem the tide of revolutions breaking out everywhere.

Intellectual unrest became endemic in the Austrian Empire on the eve of 1848 revolution. Karl Marx observed how this unrest was caused by Austrian government by imposing censorship and banning foreign periodicals coming into the country. The University of Jena in Germany became a storm affected by it. The more Metternich tried to suppress it (Carlsbad decrees) the more it spread. The wealthy middle class in Austria did not join Metternich in stemming the tide of revolutions, especially at a time when the industrial revolution was in full swing in Austria.

The agrarian unrest was sweeping Austria. The peasants desired to throw off the feudal yoke and become free citizens. They claimed rights and privileges at par with the privileged class. The uncaring attitude of the government alienated their sympathies.

In 1848 revolutions broke out everywhere in the Austrian Empire. It began in Palermo and the Spanish Bourbon ruler was forced to grant a constitution in January. Tuscany was affected next. Then the papal states followed suit. Germany was in a tumult and in many states the rulers were forced to grant a constitution. Similarly, Prussia was in political turmoil and the ruler had to grant a new constitution. However, it was a revolt in Hungary led by Lord Kossuth which shook the Austrian capital, Vienna, to its very foundation.

## **Hungarian Revolution (1848-49)**

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Students, peasants and workers of Vienna stormed into the Diet demanding the dismissal of Metternich. There was civil war. They were highly inspired by a speech delivered by Lord Kossuth (1802-94) which was translated into German. He condemned the reactionary policies of Austria and demanded equal status with Hungary. He demanded a new

democratic constitution for Hungary with provision for freedom of press, association, meeting, and abolition of the privileges of the nobles. In the Hungarian capital, Budapest, the people forced the nobles to accept a 'People's Charter'. Laws were passed in March and April by the Hungarian Diet which the democrats wanted Austria to accept so as to enable their country to attain equal status with Austria in all respects.

Unable to face the wrath of the people, Metternich fled and the Austrian Emperor received the deputation of Hungarians led by Lord Kossuth and Arch Duke Stephen. He accepted all their demands. A constituent assembly met in Hungary which drafted a new constitution providing for a Parliament, elections once in three years, manhood suffrage, equity in taxation, a free press, and a ministry responsible to the Hungarian Diet. The Austrian Emperor approved the new constitution and it looked as though the Hungarian revolution had succeeded in getting her independent status recognised by Austria.

In Italy, Austria faced a worst crisis. Her troops were driven out of Milan and Venice. The King of Piedmont was encouraged, by revolutions breaking out everywhere, to declare war on Austria in order to expel her from the Italian peninsula. Elsewhere, the Croats demanded that their ancient rights be restored. Similarly, the Czechs in Prague (Bohemia) demanded all those rights and privileges on par with Hungarians. It was only in Galicia that the Poles were kept in check. Overwhelmed by these demands made by several subject races, and unable to resist them at this juncture, the Austrian Emperor conceded a single liberal constitution for the whole empire. Hungary was to enjoy her special status.

Thus Austria was facing adversities on account of the centrifugal forces operating in the empire. She was unable to take steps to avert the crisis of greatest magnitude in her history. It was also a great moment of her humiliation seeing the way how Metternich had ruled the empire with an iron will and tenacity. The emperor left Vienna with his family to avoid witnessing frequent riots and settled in Innsbruck. In June his Slav subjects arranged a Congress at Prague for which different sections of Slavs were invited to attend with the purpose of forging unity.

In the meanwhile, the emperor heard some happy news. The Austrian commander in Italy, Radetzky succeeded in quelling a revolt. Thereafter came another happy tiding, that Windischgratz, the Austrian

governor of Vienna, had quelled a revolt by bombing Prague. From yet another quarter news arrived that the Czechs of Bohemia had failed to forge a united front.

One need not look far for the reasons that brought the failure of revolutions in the Austrian empire. In each province of the empire, there were majority and minority sections of people who could not see eye to eye. For example, in Bohemia the minority section was composed of Germans who could not agree on issues with the majority composed of Czechs. Similarly, the Croats and Rumanians of Hungary felt unhappy at the rule of the majority, the Magyars. When the minorities demanded certain rights and safeguards, the Magyars denied them. As a result the Croats revolted against Magyar rule in Hungary. Their great leader was Jellacic who believed that he might secure more concessions from the Austrian emperor than the Magyars. The Austrian emperor watched different sections of his subjects quarrelling among themselves with satisfaction and bided his time to smash them. In the meantime he received the news that the Austrian General in Italy, Radetzky, had routed the Italian army at Custozza in July 1848.

The emperor urged the Croats to invade Hungary. In October, he sought the help of Windischgratz in Prague to subdue the Austrian capital, Vienna. That city was bombarded and it submitted. Jellacic defeated a force of the Hungarians sent by Lord Kossuth to rescue the democrats of Vienna. For the first time the Imperial Government of Austria re-established its control over rebellious subjects. The Austrian emperor, Ferdinand, abdicated due to indisposition, leaving his successor, Francis Joseph (in his teens) free to do what he liked. As he was not party to all the concessions given by his predecessor, the new emperor viewed revolutions with disdain and decided to suppress them vigorously.

Jellacic and Windischgratz marched their troops towards the Hungarian capital, Budapest. Kossuth fled and his government organised the resistance movement against the Austrian army in the outlying provinces. It was remarkably successful in compelling the Austrian army to withdraw from Budapest. After severing ties with Austria, Kossuth now declared Hungary an independent Republic in March 1849. He became the 'Governor President'. In these circumstances

the Austrian emperor appealed for help from Russia where the Czar was too eager and willing to suppress revolutions and republics. British Foreign Secretary, Palmerstone, protested against Russian intervention but it went unheeded. The Russian troops marched from the east, the Austrians led by General Haynau from the south, and Jellacic from the west, all moved towards the Hungarian capital. Kossuth's last minute concessions offered to the minorities went in vain. Kossuth and his generals quarrelled and Hungary's defeat was certain. Kossuth fled to Turkey. The Hungarian army surrendered to the invading Russians. But it was left to the Austrian General Haynau (nicknamed Hyena), to perpetrate massacres of Hungarian soldiers which shocked the conscience of civilised European countries. By 1851 the Austrian government was in full control of the situation. Her iron rule had been clamped on all the provinces after withdrawing the constitutions given under duress in 1848. Only in Prussia, Bavaria, Piedmont and Hanover, the liberal constitutions continued to remain in force.

## Poland

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One of the largest states of Europe during the seventeenth century was the ancient kingdom of Poland. The kingship there was elective and the nobles enjoyed many privileges. In the course of time, the kingdom became weak and the government inefficient. Internal dissensions in the kingdom attracted the attention of foreign powers. Like vultures waiting for carrion, they were eagerly waiting to despoil and snatch her territories. During a short period of seventy-three years, this great kingdom was partitioned thrice (1722, 1793, 1795) by great European powers Prussia, Austria and Russia, for their benefit. Thus Poland disappeared from the map as her territories were annexed by the above mentioned powers. When Napoleon came to power he conquered some parts of Poland and thereafter resurrected it by setting up the Grand Duchy to Warsaw.

After the defeat of Napoleon, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was acquired by the Czar as per the decision of the peacemakers in the Congress of Vienna. Czar Alexander I was an enigmatic personality. He tried to revive the kingdom of Poland by demanding territories held by

Prussia and Austria. They refused to consider his demands. But Poland was resurrected and the Czar went ahead by restoring all her rights under a constitutional monarchy with himself as her head. He introduced several reforms as per the charter and presided over the opening ceremony of the first Diet in 1818. Among the important reforms introduced were the freedom of press, restoring the Polish language the official status, new code of laws, foundation of the University of Warsaw, avenues of employment for Polish citizens, and so on. As a matter of fact Poland enjoyed better status as a free country than Russia herself! The liberal Czar promised to the Poles that he would soon include Lithuania into their kingdom. But this 'liberal phase' in the career of the Czar ended suddenly when interference by Metternich set everything at naught. His officials began to violate the constitutional laws of Poland in many respects. Press censorship was imposed. The Parliament was not summoned for the next five years. The promised annexation of Lithuania did not take place. As a result of his reactionary policies, he alienated the sympathy of the Poles.

There was no love lost between the Poles and the Russians with the accession of Czar Nicholas I (1825-55) to the throne of Russia following the death of Czar Alexander I. His regime witnessed the most reactionary policies as far as the Poles were concerned. The press censorship was tightened and the promised merger of Lithuania with the Polish kingdom did not materialise. The Polish officials were withdrawn from Lithuania and they were replaced by the Russians. Some Poles had to stand trial for their involvement in the Decembrist revolt. The new Czar even thought of using Polish troops to suppress the French Revolution of 1830. His regime had made him most unpopular.

Following the French Revolution of 1830, the Poles revolted. The Russian governor with his Lithuanian troops was exploited from the country and the Polish Diet throned the Russian Czar. Czar Nicholas sent a force of 80,000 men to subdue Poland and it accomplished the task by September 1831. As a punishment, the Czar withdrew the old constitution granted to Poland. Elections were cancelled and the official Polish language was replaced by Russian. The Polish army was disbanded. The Czarist regime became brutally repressive. Thousands of Poles fled the country to avoid persecution. Poland ceased to exist and

became a Russian province. The policy of Russianisation in Poland was followed. The Poles failed despite their patriotic fervour. They expected that a European power would come to their help in their hour of crisis. But that was not to be.

Following the death of Nicholas I, his son Alexander II, succeeded to the Russian throne. His reign witnessed some improvements in Poland. The universities were reopened. The Poles were granted some measure of autonomy, and religious persecutions were stopped. The serfs in Poland were emancipated. Despite these improvements, the Poles nursed a grievance because they did not like their Russian connection. When an agricultural institution founded to improve the lot of the peasants was closed forcibly by the Russians, troubles started. Demonstrations against Russian rule were held and it was followed by firing on the Warsaw crowd. A full-scale revolt broke out in 1863 even though the Poles knew that it would not succeed. The revolt was brutally suppressed. The autonomy granted earlier was withdrawn. However the Polish peasants who did not participate in the revolt were given rewards "with a gift of the freehold of half their land". Thus all the Polish revolts were snuffed out and the policy of Russianisation was followed by the rulers of Russia. Despite their brutal subjugation, Poland, nevertheless achieved rapid economic progress. Their national spirit remained invincible.

## Suggested Reading

1. Priscilla, Robertson, *Revolution of 1848*.
2. Fejto, F., *The Opening of an Era, 1848*.
3. Woodcock, G., *A Hundred Years of Revolution: 1848 and After*.
4. Brunn, Geoffrey, *Revolution and Reaction, 1848-1852*.

# 9

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## Unification of Italy

Prince Metternich referred to Italy in a most contemptible phrase, "mere geographic expression". Ever since the fall of the Roman empire, her territory was subjected to a series of invasions by barbarians. The Ostrogoths, the Lombards, and the Papacy destroyed her sense of unity. Italy witnessed worst treatment at the hands of King Charles VIII. Her native princes being too busy with their quarrels neglected the protection of the national borders. It was this fact which made Machiavelli record his observations in his famous book, *The Prince*. Italy "became cockpit of Europe, where foreign powers contended for mastery".

With the invasion of Italy by Napoleon, her subjects, for the first time witnessed a semblance of national unity and enlightened government. Her hopes of achieving the unification seemed possible in the not too distant future. When Napoleon imposed heavy taxes and snatched away most of her art treasures, the Italians were provoked. His fall and the subsequent division of the state of Italy attracted the attention of great powers at the Congress of Vienna.

Austria gained Lombardy and Venetia, situated in northern Italy. Parma, Modena and Tuscany were handed over to the Habsburg princes. The Pope controlled all the states of central Italy, namely, Romagna and the Marches. The Spanish Bourbon monarchy gained the two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily). The Italian ruler of Piedmont was restored to his original position. He gained control over Sardinia, Nice and Savoy. The latter two were mainly inhabited by the French.

From the above, Metternich's description of Italy seemed appropriate. Besides her truncated position, her subjects were also found to be lacking

in political consciousness. They did not have the will to forge unity. Italy did not produce great leaders worth mentioning till the middle of the nineteenth century. The country was extremely backward in all respects.

The Austrian rule over northern Italy was characterised by eternal vigilance and ruthless suppression of the subjects. So the Austrian government became very unpopular. The people did not enjoy basic freedoms and the press was gagged. All liberal opinions were totally put down. Tyranny of the worst type was witnessed in the north. The only department which functioned most efficiently was of the police. In the central Italian states, the rule of the Pope became unpopular. He maintained medieval institutions which did not serve the people well. The Papal administration was found to be most inefficient. Brigandage and social anarchy prevailed. In the Austrian held provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, the administration was totally centralised. A large number of spies kept watch over the people. An old woman there complained that her daughter was afraid to sneeze because Metternich would come to know of it!

## Italian National Movement

The earliest movement directed towards achieving freedom from foreign rule was confined to a small section, the *Carbonaris* (meaning charcoal-burners). They organised secret societies in important towns and encouraged people to revolt against the tyranny of foreign rulers. Encouraged by the success of the revolution in Spain, the Carbonaris staged a revolt against King Ferdinand of Naples. The revolt succeeded and the king was forced to grant a liberal constitution. After taking his oath of loyalty to the new constitution, the king went to attend the Laibach Congress. He went there to secure the approval of the European statesman for his action. But on reaching there he begged Prince Metternich to restore him to his full authority over his kingdom. Metternich was able to assist him by punishing the rebellious subjects. So the Carbonari revolt at Naples in 1820 met with temporary success. This revolt was followed by two others. The kingdom of Piedmont and Lombardy also witnessed revolts staged by their subjects in 1821. The Carbonaris were behind this movement. In the former kingdom, its ruler

Victor Emmanuel I abdicated his throne since he did not wish to alienate his subjects on the one hand and wage war with Austria on the other. During the time of the regency of Charles Albert, the kingdom of Sardinia received a liberal constitution. However it was withdrawn during the time of his successor. A civil war broke out on this issue and Austria helped in suppressing the people's revolt. The liberals were defeated in the Battle of Novara (1821). Thus Austria proved to be the arch enemy of political reforms in Italy.

## Impact of 1830 Revolution

In 1830, a revolution broke out in France which affected Belgium and also Italian states. Under the influence of Carbonaris, the peoples of Modena, Parma and the Papal states rose in rebellion. Their purpose was to secure liberal constitutions and other political reforms. The Pope appealed to the Austrian chancellor for help and the Austrian Whitecoats arrived in the Papal states and ruthlessly suppressed the revolts. The expectations of the rebels of French assistance was belied since Metternich prevented the French king from going to the help of the rebels.

So early attempts of the Italian patriots to overthrow Austrian regime proved disastrous. However, their failures were not without lessons for others. The Italians realised that they had a long way to go to achieve freedom. It became clear that Austria was the principal enemy and only her defeat would ensure the unification of Italy. The Carbonaris did not have the backing of the masses, hence, they failed.

## Mazzini (1805-72)

Guiseppe Mazzini was born in Genoa, a town which had joined Piedmont. He was the son of a physician. Even during his childhood days he began to brood over the ills affecting his country, and to his sensitive mind nothing seemed more repugnant than the foreign rule in his country. In his writings he often expressed his unhappiness over this situation. It is said that he wore a black dress to express his sorrow for the bondage of his country. He became an ascetic and plunged into the freedom struggle. He joined the Carbonaris and participated in their

secret activities. In 1830, he was arrested and sent to Savona prison for six months. Subsequently, he was exiled for his conspiracy to establish the society of *Young Italy*. It was during his prison days that Mazzini planned to involve the youth of Italy into the mainstream of patriotic struggle for achieving national unity. He declared "place youth at the head of the insurgent multitude, you know not the secret of the power hidden in those youthful hearts". Mazzini established a number of branches of *Young Italy* all over the country. Through speeches and writings he inspired the youth. He asked them to climb mountains and meet shepherds to convince them of the need for unity of the country. He further appealed to them to visit factories and explain to the workers the evils of the foreign rule. He wanted to make them aware of their rights which were denied to them by foreign governments. He made a fervent appeal to the king of Sardinia, Charles Albert, to take over the leadership and said,

All Italy waits for one word, one only, to make herself yours ... place yourself at the head of the nation and write on your banners 'Union, liberty, independence', proclaim the liberty of thought, liberate Italy from the barbarians, on this condition we bind ourselves round you, we proffer you our lives, we will lead to your banner the little states of Italy, we will preach the world that creates armies. Unite us sire, and we shall conquer.

As he did not get any response to his fervent appeal, Mazzini continued to strengthen the society of *Young Italy* as vanguard for the national movement. The *Young Italy* worked as a secret organisation and its members took an oath of loyalty to serve the nation. "God, the people and Italy" were to be the watchwords of this great organisation. The youth was motivated to struggle for the liberation of the country. Through the means of secret propaganda, Mazzini awakened the masses from its lethargy and directed it to struggle for unity and independence.

## Uprisings in Italy (1846-48)

In 1846 Pius IX occupied the Papal chair, and thousands of Italians looked forward eagerly for his support to the national movement. The Pope also encouraged the people by announcing several reforms in his dominion which included amnesty, free press, elections, constructions of railways and so on. Prince Metternich himself confessed: "We were prepared for everything ... except for liberal Pope; now we have got one,

there is no answering for anything". Gioberti, an Italian patriot, even prophesied that it would be the Pope who would liberate the country and not Sardinia. However, the Pope's enthusiasm for liberal reforms began to wane after a few concessions, and the hopes of millions of Italians were belied. On the eve of the 1848 revolutions, there was no doubt that nationalism in Italy had become widespread.

The year 1848 brought about many upheavals in Italian states following the outbreaks of revolutions in France and other countries. The Sicilians were the first to stage a revolt against oppression. The ruler fled to Naples where he granted a liberal constitution. The Pope too had to yield to the popular clamour and granted a liberal constitution. King Charles Albert of Sardinia respected people's sentiments and granted them a liberal constitution. Similarly, Tuscany received a new constitution. The fall of Metternich, following a revolution in Austria (1848), had its immediate impact on Austrian held provinces of Lombardy and Venetia. The Austrian government there collapsed in March 1848 and fierce fighting broke out in Milan and the Austrian Commander-in-Chief Marshal Radetzky, was forced to retreat to the "Quadrilateral". Venice followed the example of Milan by expelling the Austrian army and proclaiming herself Republic. The rulers of Parma and Modena fled. There was a popular demand in all states of Italy for the end of Austrian rule.

It was upon King Charles Albert of Sardinia that all eyes were now turned, to accomplish this great mission. He wore the mantle of leadership to fulfil his "historic mission". The people of Milan beckoned him to intervene in their war with Austria and punish her for committing the sacrilege of occupying Ferrara which belonged to the Pope. Count Cavour, who was then the editor of a paper, *Risorgimento*, urged him that, "The hour of fate has struck for the Sardinian Monarchy. One road only is open, that of immediate war." Popular enthusiasm forced the Pope, the Duke of Tuscany, and even Ferdinand of Naples to join Charles in his struggle against Austria. The Italian forces won a victory over the Austrian troops led by Radetzky. Unfortunately, the Italian forces failed to take advantage of this victory and pursue the enemies. As a result, the Austrian troops got themselves reorganised and captured a few towns in Venetia. To the disappointment of all Italians, the Pope made

announcement of his decision to withdraw support to the nationalist cause. Similarly, the king of Naples withdrew the armed forces from the battlefield as well as the constitution granted to the people.

With these defections, Sardinia was left alone in the battlefield to engage the enemy. Had Charles Albert displayed his irrevocable resolution and pursued the enemy, he could have retrieved the situation from getting worse. Unfortunately, he could not do so. Despite the Pope's injunction, the states of central and northern Italy (Venetia, Lombardy, Parma, Piacenza and Modena) decided through plebiscites for union of their kingdoms with Sardinia. Charles Albert was defeated by Austrian troops at Custoza in July 1848 and was forced to surrender. He concluded the Salasco armistice by which northern Italy was restored to Austria. His failure to set up monarchy in northern Italy disappointed many, and revolutionaries in Rome proclaimed a republic under Mazzini's leadership. The Pope was forced to go into exile. Charles Albert felt humiliated and made another attempt to defeat the enemy. He failed because his troops were defeated in the battle of Novara. Unable to bear further humiliation, he abdicated his throne in favour of his son, Victor Emmanuel II. France supported the cause of the restoration of the Pope despite Garibaldi's attempt to protect the Roman Republic. Subsequently, the Austrian forces recovered from her indisposition and riveted its yoke on the Italian states.

## Cavour (1810-61)

No one could grasp the political situation prevailing in Italy in 1848 better than Count Cavour. Born in Turin in 1810, he belonged to an aristocratic family. After completing his university education, he joined the army as an engineer. He was bored with the routine military training and saw no future in it. He got into trouble for openly supporting the French Revolution of 1830. His superior officers watched his activities with concern. Cavour resigned his army commission in 1831 and devoted his time to the improvements of his landed estate. He gained knowledge of agriculture which was to come handy when he became a minister. He took interest in political affairs of his state and became a good student of British parliamentary government and process. He toured Europe and

Britain, and watched the proceedings of the House of Commons from the strangers' gallery. He acquainted himself with the economic problems facing Britain.

In 1847, he founded a journal, *Il Resorgimento* (meaning rebirth), in Piedmont to awaken the Italians and direct them to carry on struggle for achieving unity, independence and constitutional reforms. In 1848, almost all the rulers of Italy granted constitutions. In Piedmont, the ruler granted a liberal constitution, and elections to the Assembly were held. Count Cavour got elected and made his mark as a farsighted politician and statesman. His speeches in the assembly impressed the king and he was taken into the Cabinet. After a short interval the king was pleased to appoint him as prime minister of Piedmont (1851-59, 1860-62). Count Cavour had already thought over the problem facing the country, and he was convinced that the kingdom of Piedmont alone would not be in a position to liberate the country. Austria was too strong an enemy to contend with. Mazzini's plan and Garibaldi's adventures would come to nothing unless properly supplemented with diplomacy. Therefore, the wisdom lay in securing the help of a powerful country such as Britain or France. Since the fate of his country had already been settled by the Congress of Vienna, they would not like to reopen the issue unless it was imperative. Therefore, Cavour waited for a golden opportunity, which came in the form of the Crimean war.

Before he could take advantage of it, he left no stone unturned to make his states, Piedmont and Sardinia, models, worthy of being emulated by others. He introduced several reforms which transformed the backward kingdom into a modern State.

Cavour tried to draw the loyalty of the people of Italy to the House of Savoy by introducing several major reforms for the prosperity of the kingdom of Sardinia. He encouraged trade and commerce, built railways, introduced modern postal system and banking, patronised shipping, organised a new taxation system, curbed the power of the church and reorganised the army on modern lines. He introduced the Atlantic Mail service. He spread news about the prosperous conditions prevailing in his kingdom. He sought sympathy through propaganda literature for the cause of Italian freedom from foreign rule. The king was persuaded to adopt stern measures against the Catholic Church by passing necessary

measures, namely, the Siccardia and Ratazzi laws.

## Cavour's Diplomacy

As mentioned earlier, the outbreak of the Crimean War gave an opportunity to Cavour to internationalise the issue of Italian unification. Hoping that Britain and France would win this war against Russia, he threw in his lot with these two countries in spite of the opposition from his colleagues. He wrote to the Sardinian General, La Mormora, "You have the future of the country in your haversack". Cavour was taking a political gamble in forcing his kingdom to join the war on the side of Britain and France. If Britain and France won the war with Sardinian help, he hoped that she would find a legitimate place. His gamble yielded rich dividends. The war ended with the defeat of Russia. Britain and France praised the Sardinian army for their courage and bravery, particularly in the Battle of Tchernaya. The stigma caused by their humiliating defeat at the hands of the Austrians earlier in the battle of Novara was removed and the Sardinian soldiers covered themselves with glory.

At the time of the signing of peace treaty, Piedmont was invited to attend the Paris Peace Conference. The prestige of Cavour increased when he attended the conference and addressed the assembly in Paris in 1856. He raised the Italian issue which he declared "has become for the future a European question". Emperor Napoleon III of France showed great sympathy and asked Cavour as to what he could do for Italy. It was then that Cavour convinced Napoleon how he could help Piedmont in liberating the rest of the country from foreign yoke. For Cavour the Paris Peace Conference proved to be his "finest hour". He raised the issue of Italian freedom at the right place and right time and succeeded in striking a chord of sympathy with the French emperor. Britain also expressed her sympathy for the cause. But she did not take any positive steps towards helping Piedmont.

It was not until Orsini, an Italian bandit, made an attempt to kill the French emperor, that steps were taken to give positive help to Sardinia. The French emperor, sent a secret message to Count Cavour to meet him at Plombieres during the summer of 1858. Cavour and Napoleon III

secretly met there and both agreed to take steps for expelling Austria from northern and central Italy. In return for the French assistance, France would get Savoy from Piedmont. It was also agreed that King Victor Emmanuel II should give his daughter in marriage to Prince Jerome, a cousin of the French emperor. On the New Year's day, the French emperor startled the Austrian ambassador by saying, "I regret that our relations with your government are not as good as formerly." Similarly, King Victor Emmanuel II opened the Parliament at Turin, " ... while we respect treaties, we cannot be insensible to the cry of anguish which comes to us from many parts of Italy." The significance of these statements coming from two statesmen left Austria in doubt about the impending war with Sardinia. Britain tried its best to bring the disputed parties to the negotiating table but failed. Cavour was in need of *casus belli* and therefore provoked Austria by creating incidents on their common border. He was afraid that the French emperor may waver and may change his mind if war does not break out. Austria demanded the demobilisation of Sardinian troops across the border which was not conceded by Sardinia. Therefore, Austria declared war. Cavour exclaimed with joy, "The die is cast, and we have made history."

### **The Franco-Sardinian War with Austria (April-July, 1859)**

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To many European statesmen, the action of Austria was clearly in the wrong since efforts were being made to avert it. On hearing the news, France sent troops to help Sardinia to defeat the Austrians. The French troops were commanded by no other person than the emperor himself. The Austrians were defeated at Montebello, Palestros and Magenta. These victories were followed by another magnificent one at Solferino. The Austrians were forced to evacuate from the state of Lombardy. They retreated to the nearby forts. If the war had continued with the same tempo Austria would have been driven out of Venice. However, the French emperor suddenly developed cold feet and withdrew his forces from northern Italy. Napoleon III personally met the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph I at Villafranca and concluded a peace agreement with him on July 11, 1859.

Cavour was shocked at the behaviour of the French emperor. He felt very much humiliated at this unfavourable turn of events in the midst of victories, all because of the *volte face* of Emperor Napoleon III. He submitted his resignation to the king immediately. By the Treaty of Zurich (November 10, 1859), Austria gave Lombardy to Sardinia but retained Venetia.

Despite this serious setback, the efforts of the Italian statesman had not been in vain. The Sardinian forces gained confidence in themselves since they had achieved several victories. The people living in the Duchies of Parma, Modena and Tuscany rose in revolt against their rulers. They desired that their state should merge with the enlarged kingdom of Sardinia. In the meantime, by the treaty of Zurich, the French emperor hoped to receive Nice and Savoy from Piedmont. Therefore, he provided for a clause whereby the subjects of the above three states could decide their future by having plebiscites. Similarly, he desired plebiscites in the small states of Nice and Savoy, so that their political future could be settled. Cavour was reappointed prime minister in 1860, and he agreed with the proposals of the French emperor. The people of the three Duchies and Romagna desired annexation with Piedmont when the results of plebiscites were announced. Similarly, the people of Nice and Savoy showed willingness for the merger of their states with France. In April 1860 King Victor Emmanuel II ruled a bigger kingdom than before whose borders stretched from the Alps to the Papal states. He gave away Nice and Savoy to the French emperor. Venetia remained in the hands of Austria, but the process of unification of Italy had already begun. Mazzini and Garibaldi did not like the way unification process was going on in Italy under the Sardinian monarchy. The latter bemoaned the loss of his native place, Nice, to the French, and cursed Cavour's bargain with the French emperor.

## **Garibaldi**

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During the next few years the Italian struggle for freedom centred on the exploits of Garibaldi (1807-82). One of the most romantic figures in the making of Italy, Garibaldi, was born at Nice in 1807. Although his parents wanted him to become a priest, he became a great sailor and an

intrepid soldier. Early in his life he was captured by the pirates but was lucky enough to escape. His voyages gave him an opportunity to meet some of the Italian exiles and patriots whose love for their country made deep impressions on his sensitive mind. In the course of time none could excel him in the art of guerilla warfare and his spirit of adventure. Every drop of his blood yearned for unity and freedom of his motherland. He joined the Young Italy movement led by Mazzini and played an important role in the 1834 uprising in Savoy which unfortunately failed. He had to go into voluntary exile. Between 1836 and 1848 Garibaldi spent his life in South America, mostly participating in the liberation movement. He fought for Uruguay against the Brazilian empire and Argentina. He led the dangerous life of a seasoned guerilla fighter in the wilds of South America and acquired his life-partner, Anita, after a daring exploit. He collected a large number of followers who were prepared to lay down their lives for his sake. Called Redshirts, they followed Garibaldi to Italy in 1848 to share the thrills of their master's exploits.

Garibaldi returned to Italy in 1848 to place his services at the disposal of Charles Albert who unfortunately spurned it. Then Garibaldi went to Milan where the people enthusiastically welcomed him. And he collected an army of 30,000 men. With their support he harassed the Austrians and then proceeded to Rome for saving the Republic established by Mazzini which was threatened by the invasion of King Bomba of Naples. In the meantime, the Austrian army arrived with reinforcements from the French and they attacked Rome. His position became untenable and he had to flee with his wife and followers in 1849. Chased by the Austrian and French troops, and losing some of his best men, he proceeded to Venice to assist her in a heroic struggle. On his journey, his wife, who shared his dangerous life throughout, fell ill and died in his arms. Italy being too hot for his dangerous pursuits, he left the country with a heavy heart. He wandered here and there along the coast of Sardinia. He met Cavour in 1858 and announced his loyalty to the House of Savoy. When Piedmont waged war with Austria in 1859, Garibaldi participated and earned for himself glory for his daring exploits. He became a legend in Italy. The adulation he received from his people made him resolve that he would achieve the unification and freedom of Italy before he died.

In 1860, the Sicilians sought his help in their uprising against the Bourbon tyranny and Garibaldi let them know that he would help them if they themselves took the initiative. He secretly met Cavour to bless his enterprise and his support in private although the government publicly denounced it. It may be remembered that conditions in Sicily and Naples under Spanish Bourbon monarch, Bomba, had turned from bad to worse. In the words of Gladstone, who happened to visit the Neapolitan prisons in 1850-51, the Bourbon rule appeared to be "an outrage upon religion, upon humanity and upon decency". Over 20,000 political prisoners, many of them highly educated, suffered untold miseries after being chained as dangerous criminals in dark dungeons. In 1859, King Bomba died leaving his successor to face the wrath of the people.

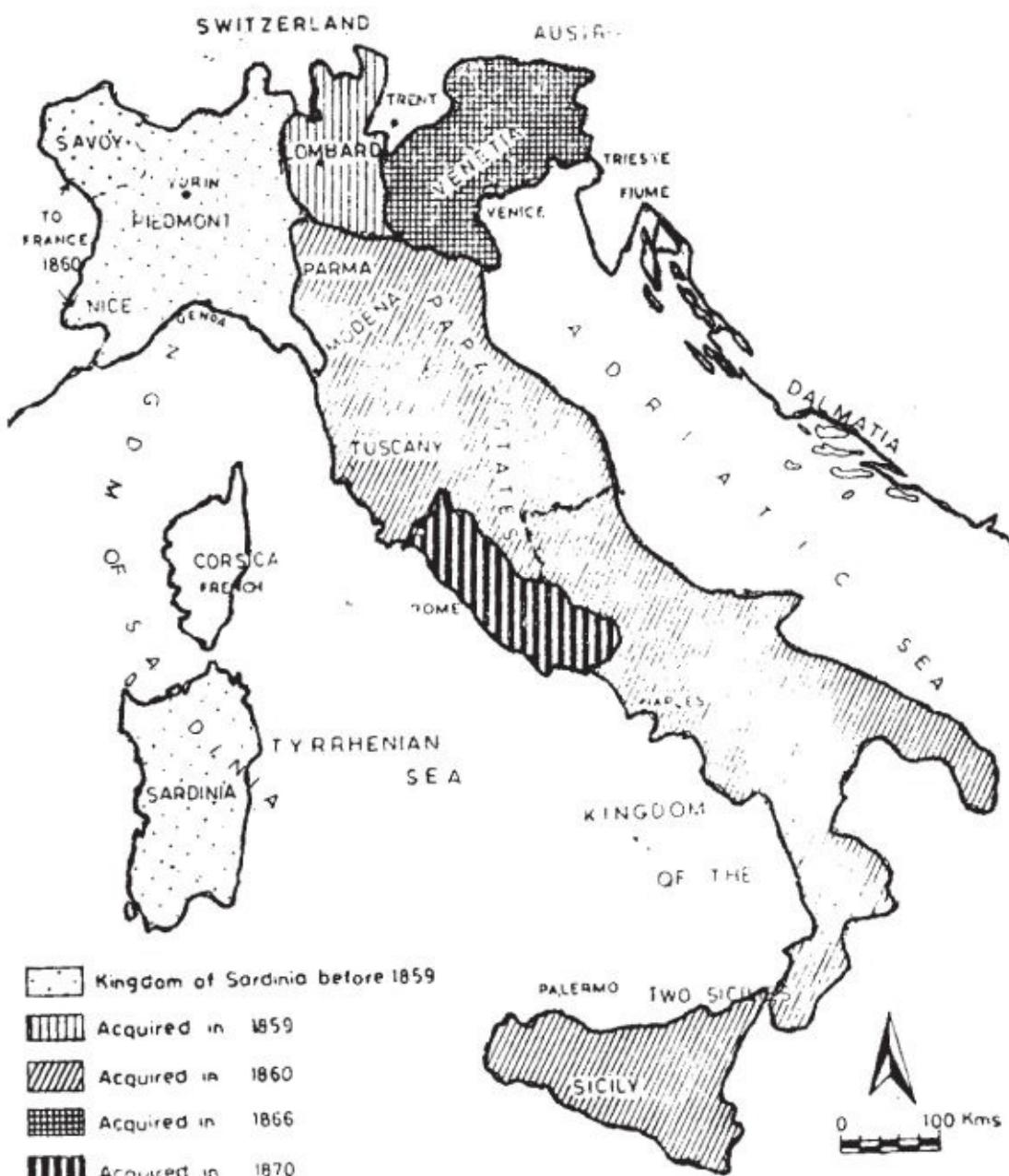
Financed secretly by the king and his prime minister, Garibaldi embarked with his troops at Genoa comprising 1000, volunteers to help the Sicilians in their struggle to uproot the hated Bourbon rule. Garibaldi's conquest of Sicily was accomplished within two months. His small ships carrying volunteers took shelter behind the British ships moving towards Marsala (Sicily) and landed safely. The government troops hardly noticed their landing, having confused them with the British sailors. Before they realised their mistake, Garibaldi's Thousand attacked them. With no loss of life on his side Garibaldi achieved the impossible – the defeat of 20,000 Neapolitan troops – with the help of the local rebels within two months.

This most romantic episode was followed by another equally daring exploit, the conquest of Naples. The next adventurous move on the part of Garibaldi lay in crossing the straits of Messina which separated Sicily from the mainland. Everything now depended upon Britain since her battleships were there around the corner. The French emperor was frightened at the progress made by Garibaldi and suggested to Britain that an Anglo-French force should close the Straits. Cavour also requested Britain and France to do the same thing, but simultaneously sent a special messenger to the British Foreign Ministry requesting not to do such a thing. Britain communicated to France that the presence of French ships in the Straits of Messina would be resented and thus paved the way for Garibaldi's invasion of Naples. He reached the mainland safely, and the resistance of the Neapolitan troops was easily overcome

when thousands of natives joined his triumphal march. It was then that both the king of Sardinia and Cavour began to doubt the intentions of Garibaldi. Would he remain loyal to the Sardinian monarchy or to his republican ideals like Mazzini? What if he tried to attack Rome (where the Pope ruled with French army support)? How can he be restrained? Cavour was obsessed by these thoughts and finally took a big gamble in his life. He sent the Piedmontese army across the Papal states to forestall Garibaldi's attack on Rome. Cavour succeeded in his plan in ensuring the support of Garibaldi to the cause of monarchy on the one hand and avoid falling out with France by preventing Garibaldi's attack on Rome. Plebiscites held in Sicily, Naples and the Papal states showed people's desire for merger with Piedmont. King Victor Emmanuel II arrived in Naples and Garibaldi was left with no choice other than surrendering to him. Refusing all honours, this great patriot left for his home, the island of Caprera, with "only a few hundred francs of borrowed money and a bag of seed corn". After expressing hope that Rome and Venice would ultimately unite with the rest of Italy, Cavour died in 1861. During the same year Parliament met at Turin, the capital of Piedmont.

In 1862 Garibaldi became impatient because Rome was still being held by the Pope. Moreover, Victor Emmanuel and Cavour had denied him the chance of conquering it. Therefore he rushed with his volunteers to capture it. He was stopped by the Piedmontese army, and during the fight he was shot in the foot. His cup of humiliation was filled to the brim. He retired from active career and spent the rest of his life in peace. Incidentally, Mazzini continued to pine away as he could not establish the Italian republic. When the parliament met at Turin, Victor Emmanuel was declared 'King of Italy'.

## UNIFICATION OF ITALY



### Annexation of Venetia (1866)

At the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian war King Victor Emmanuel

proposed military alliance with Austria in exchange for the return of Venetia. The Austrian Emperor turned down the offer. It was about this time that Bismarck sought an alliance of Italy in his war with Austria. He promised to procure for her Venice from Austria if he won the war. All Italy had to do was to invade Austria from the south. When the war broke out (1866), Italy created diversion by attacking Austria in the south. Although Italian troops were badly beaten, Prussia won the war within seven weeks. As promised, Bismarck compelled the defeated Austria to cede Venetia to Italy.

## **Annexation of Rome (1870)**

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The unification of Italy was completed in 1870 with the annexation of Rome, a kingdom belonging to the Pope. The French troops guarded his kingdom. However, the French troops were withdrawn by Emperor Napoleon III when he declared war on Prussia in 1870. The appeal of King Victor Emmanuel II to the Pope to respect people's desire for the merger of his state with the rest of Italy went in vain. The Italian troops marched into Rome and occupied it. The Pope was allowed to rule over the Vatican city as sovereign. He did not reconcile himself to the loss of his temporal power over Rome, and therefore the rupture continued till Benito Mussolini set it right in 1929 by signing the Lateran Treaty. A plebiscite was held in Rome, in which the people overwhelmingly voted in favour of a merger with the rest of Italy. On 2 June 1871, Rome became the capital of Italy after King Victor Emmanuel II entered it with all grandeur. Thus Rome regained its status as the seat of the capital after a lapse of 1,395 years.

## Suggested Readings

1. Marriott, J.A.R., *The Makers of Modern Italy*.
2. Trevelyan, G.M., *Garibaldi and the Thousand*.
3. Ibid, *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy*.

# 10

## Unification of Germany (1815-71)

German national unity was achieved in 1871 after a slow and tortuous process because of the obstacles placed before it by Prince Metternich. The need for achieving German unity was stressed by great German liberals and scholars. It was they who sowed the seeds of nationalism when Napoleon conquered and oppressed them. Surprisingly, the first step towards unification of Germany was taken by Napoleon himself! He converted the erstwhile 300 or so German states into 38 states in 1806 and named it the Confederation of the Rhine. Representatives of the 38 rulers met at the Diet in Frankfurt to discuss common matters concerning them.

After the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815, the Congress of Vienna did not disturb the political setup in Germany and therefore the confederation continued to exist as before, but now under the leadership of Austria. Austria was made the president of the German Diet. It may be noted that the German Diet at Frankfurt came to have an international character since the rulers of Britain, Denmark and Netherlands sent their representatives to it by virtue of their possessions in Germany. Unfortunately, the German Diet did not represent the aspirations of the people since it consisted of the representatives of rulers, who were jealous and suspicious of one another.

The road towards achieving German unity was paved with great difficulties. The main obstacle was the attitude of Prince Metternich who considered it as an "infamous object". The German ruling princes could hardly be expected to realise the ideal. They were selfish and jealous, and were not prepared to sacrifice their authority for common good. Again the spirit of nationalism in Germany was not deep-rooted. During the

early years, it was confined to a small section of population, namely, philosophers, poets, writers, university professors and students. Even the liberals who desired unification of Germany were split into groups and they could not see eye to eye regarding the means to be adopted for achieving it. Agents of foreign rulers ruling over Holstein, Hanover and Luxembourg were not keen on seeing German unity. Finally, the Napoleonic wars had disturbed the Germans to such an extent that they could not think constructively regarding the future course of action in order to liberate their country. Looking at these conditions Karl Marx wrote, "Thus German unity was in itself a big question with disunion, discord and, in the case of certain eventualities, even civil war."

Since the liberals themselves were divided into groups and did not work in unison, it was left to the intellectuals—teachers and students—to spearhead the national movement. The origin of the national movement therefore could be traced to *Burschenschaft* (societies of students). The credit for founding its first branch went to the students of the University of Jena. Subsequently, similar branches were opened in 16 other German universities. These societies tried to achieve their goal by organising cultural activities in which the university teachers and students participated. One such festival was organised on a big scale to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig and the tercentenary of the Reformation. It was held at Wartburg (1817). This grand occasion was marked by speeches delivered by teachers and students and aimed at rousing national feelings. After condemning the reactionaries, the students concluded their activities by having a bonfire of emblems identified with dictatorship, militarism, and oppression. Metternich came to know of this outburst of national feelings by the intellectuals and considered it unbecoming. In the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, he impressed upon his allies, particularly the Russian Czar, about the need to nip this movement in the bud. The Wartburg Festival was followed by some disturbances. On March 23, 1819, Kotzebue, a German by birth but a Russian spy, was murdered by Karl Sand, a patriotic student, at Mannheim. To Metternich this incident gave an excuse to deal sternly with the patriotic elements which were spreading political unrest. With the consent of the Prussian king he summoned delegates from eight important states to a meeting at Karlsbad in August 1819. It was there

that he convinced them of the need for taking steps to stem the political unrest. The delegates passed necessary resolutions and they were submitted to the German Diet. This body passed laws by which the whole educational system in Germany came under police vigilance. The press was gagged. A commission was set up to watch all disturbances created by mischievous elements. In effect, Prince Metternich was becoming a dictator at the expense of numerous German rulers. Metternich would have gone a little further, had it not been for some objections raised by a few minor states. Armed with necessary powers, Metternich suppressed all student societies, gagged the press, appointed curators to watch classroom lectures in German universities, and persecuted German liberals. His monstrous behaviour provoked German writers, philosophers, historians and poets. The liberal Duke of Saxe-Weimar protested but in vain.

While the Carlsbad decrees brought about the iron rule of Austria and stamped out nationalism, Germany witnessed the birth of economic nationalism in the form of custom's union called *Zollverein*. Prussia, one of the largest German states, was the founder of this organisation, which aimed at free flow of trade inside her territory. It may be remembered that Prussia was the most backward state both economically and commercially, and to a great extent this was caused by no less than 67 different tariffs imposed on 3,800 items of goods coming from 228 different states. She could not export anything except some agricultural raw products. The first step taken towards easing the stagnant situation was the passing of Tariff Reform Law in 1818. The law allowed import of raw material without any tariff. It permitted a uniform 10 percent duty on all imported manufactured goods, and a 20 percent duty on colonial goods. Again all internal customs duties were abolished. Thus Prussia became an economic entity with most liberal economic policies. The first to join the customs union was Schwarzburg-Sondershausen. She signed a treaty by which she handed over her administration of customs to Prussia in return for free commercial intercourse and a proportional share in the customs revenue. In 1822 some more German states joined the customs union. As against Prussia's customs union, there came another which was formed by the southern states. In course of time, Prussia's customs union became popular and states automatically joined

it. Holland, Belgium and Britain signed treaties with Prussia's customs union by which they extended certain facilities to its members. The customs union or Zollverein thus converted Germany into a commercial unit and brought about rapid economic and commercial transformation. With the accrued profits derived out of this venture, the members of this union constructed railways and opened new banks. The Zollverein brought about the unity of the Germans, although it was economic in character. Austria did not join the Zollverein.

## July Revolution of 1830

The July Revolution of 1830 in France had its impact upon Germany. Although Prussia and Austria were little affected, there was much enthusiasm and political unrest in the rest of the German states. Their kings were confronted with the demands for granting constitutions. The southern states of Germany appealed to Prussia and not to Austria or the Diet, to render protection from the danger lurking across the border. Unfortunately, the Prussian king, Frederick William III, did not take advantage of this opportunity for his kingdom's aggrandisement or bringing about German unity for fear of reprisals from Metternich. Therefore, he did not grant a liberal constitution to his own subjects although he had promised them. From 1840, conditions began to change in both Austria and Prussia. For the first time, Metternich found himself in a difficult position because he could not get all his plans approved by the new emperor, Ferdinand. Similarly, in Prussia, the accession of Frederick William IV (1840-1861) to the throne inaugurated a limited era of liberalism with the granting of a constitution which provided for a parliament. Patriotic songs were heard everywhere, and particularly 'The Watch on the Rhine'. But this spell of liberalism ended suddenly with the king reversing his original stand. He was not prepared to go a step further than what he had granted earlier. He stuck to his point of divine right theory of kingship and considered any encroachment on his powers as sacrilege. He dissolved the Parliament because it provoked him with more demands for political reforms.

It was in these circumstances that news reached Germany about the fall of the Orleans Monarchy in 1848 which resulted in a chain of

revolutions in most parts of Central Europe.

In Germany, the French Revolution of 1830 had caused great political tremors. In many states the people revolted against the rulers and got liberal constitutions. The liberals of southern states met and planned to summon representatives of the people for the Parliament to be held at Frankfurt. Taking advantage of the confused situation prevailing in Austria, the people of Germany elected their representatives to the Vorparliament. The Vorparliament met on March 31 at Frankfurt (1848). In Berlin, the capital of Prussia, there was a great uprising which was suppressed. However, the king agreed to grant a liberal constitution and a Parliament for the whole country. He withdrew his troops and appointed a liberal ministry to govern the kingdom to appease his rebellious subjects and issued a proclamation which included the famous clause, "henceforth Prussia is merged in Germany".

The Vorparliament at Frankfurt consisted of 146 members representing Prussia. It ordered elections for the new National Assembly. The new National Assembly which met at Frankfurt had highly talented members. It set to itself the task of framing a liberal constitution which would be acceptable to all the state governments. However, the issue of Schleswig and Holstein states placed it in an awkward position. The Prussian king withdrew his support to those German states which were fighting against the incorporation of these two duchies into the kingdom of Denmark. The National Assembly also dithered on the issue of who should be the leader of the new German nation, Prussia or Austria. The question of offering the leadership of the new German nation to Austria was beset with a number of difficulties since she was mainly composed of 13 races. Therefore, the National Assembly offered the crown of new Germany to Frederick William IV of Prussia in April 1849.

The delegation sent to offer the crown to the Prussian king came back terribly disappointed. The Prussian king exhibited his vanity and rejected it, for in his opinion the crown should have been offered to him by the German princes and not by a revolutionary assembly. Thus the great efforts of the Frankfurt assembly ended in failure. The Republican Party in Prussia was ruthlessly suppressed by the Prussian troops in May 1849. Many German liberals found the situation intolerable and left the country. In the meantime Austria recovered from the effects of revolution

and re-established the old German Confederation. An examination of the 1848 revolution in Germany shows that Prussia was the only state which had granted a liberal constitution in 1850. In the course of time she was becoming a serious rival to Austria for the leadership of united Germany. It was unfortunate that the efforts of the Frankfurt assembly to restore German unity ended in failure. However, the Germans knew that their goal was not too far.

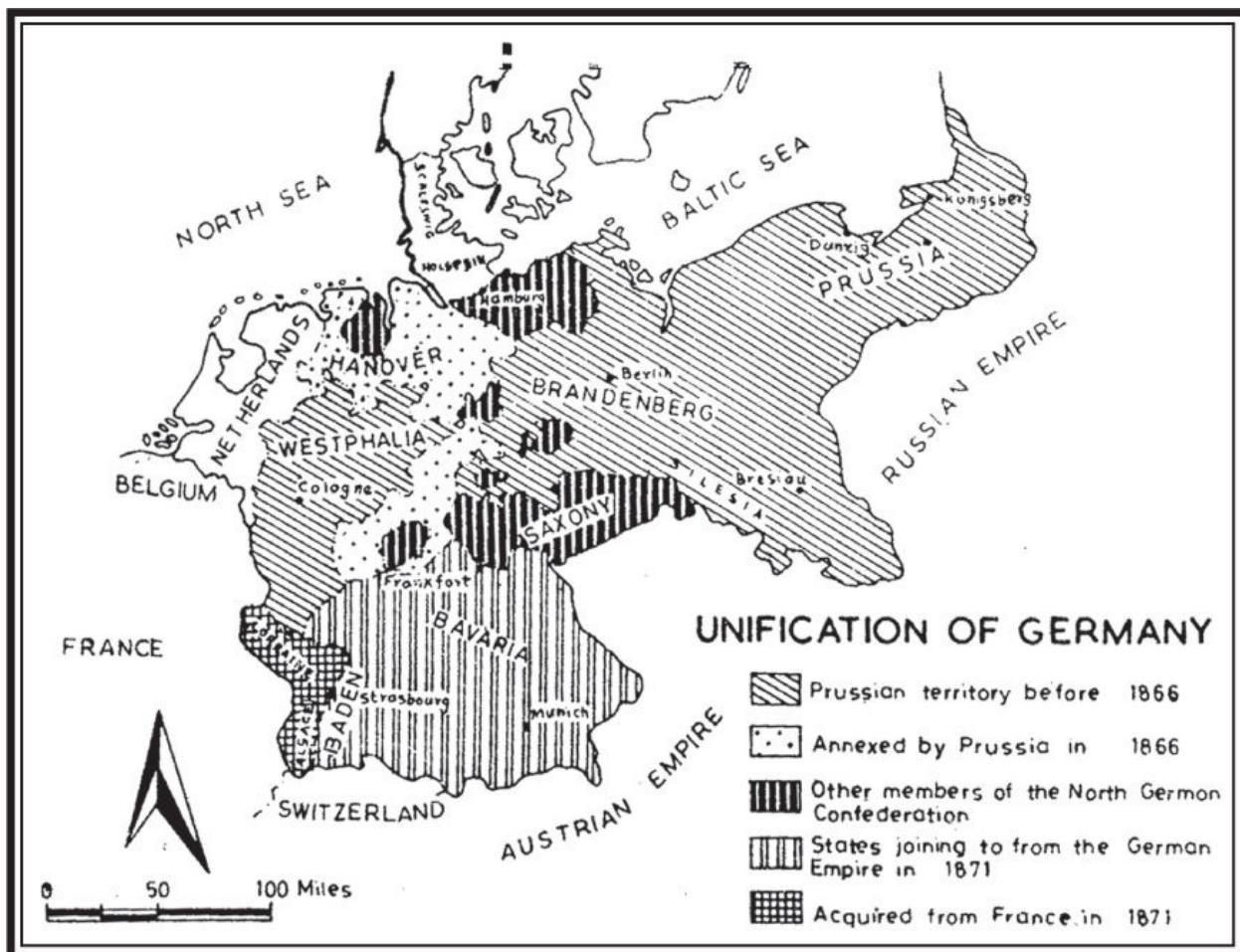
## Bismarck and the Unification of Germany (1851-71)

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Although the efforts of the Frankfurt Parliament to unite Germany under the leadership of the Prussian king failed in 1848, it was nevertheless achieved by Bismarck, an outstanding diplomat and statesman of Prussia during the nineteenth century. In the course of 20 years (1851-71), he relentlessly pursued his most desired objective—the unification of Germany—with the combination of diplomacy and wars. No other statesman, save Napoleon, had used these two means to achieve the desired objective. His brilliant strokes of diplomacy coupled with the planning and execution of wars to fulfil his objective reminded one of Machiavelli's strategy.

Otto von Bismarck Schonhausen (1815-98) hailed from a junker family in Brandenburg. After his birth his parents moved to their old estates where the boy developed country-tastes, love of hunting, riding and shooting. He spent three years of his academic life in Gottingen and Berlin where he became notorious for his quarrels, beer drinking, and such other riotous features. He went back to his home to manage his estate. After eight years of rural life he returned to take active part in the local politics. Subsequently, he became a staunch conservative and devout royalist. He was convinced that Prussia's future greatness depended upon a strong monarchy and not on democracy. He married in 1847 which changed him completely. He began to think seriously about the problems confronting the German states. He joined the civil service but was bored. He left it and entered the Prussian Diet which, until 1851, witnessed "Constitutional crisis, revolution, the rejection of the imperial crown. . ." Bismarck made his mark in the Prussian Diet with his

speeches in which he condemned the liberals for their numerous demands. To many he became an anti-democrat and a “royalist hotspur.” He was not happy when the Prussian king granted a constitution for his subjects. His outright condemnation of the Prussian liberals attracted the attention of the Prussian king, Frederick William IV. The king felt proud of him for his loyalty to the crown but found him ill-fitted to serve in the Prussian Diet. Therefore, the Prussian king appointed him minister of the crown in Berlin and subsequently sent him to Frankfurt as the representative of the Prussian government. During the next 11 years Bismarck served as a diplomat. He learned many things which served him well later in his capacity as chancellor. His diplomatic career took him to Frankfurt, St. Petersburg, Paris, Vienna and London. He came in contact with a large number of diplomats at these places. He realised that Austria was hell-bent on preventing the unity of German states under Prussia’s leadership. He also knew that Austria should be eliminated in order to bring about the unification of Germany.



Bismarck's hatred towards Austria began as early as 1853 when he informed his government that "there was no room in Germany for both Prussia and Austria, that one or the other must bend." At Frankfurt, Bismarck tried to show off that Prussia was in no way inferior to Austria by playing pranks with the Austrian delegate. It was here that Bismarck foiled Austria's attempt to destroy the Zollverein. This highly controversial figure was appointed Prime Minister of Prussia in 1862 to the surprise of many diplomats of Europe. Frederick William IV died in 1861 and was succeeded by his brother, William I (1862-1888), who had a successful career in the army. His army career made him practical and he was known for his orderly and disciplined habits. He believed that Prussia's future greatness depended upon her military strength. His idea was shared by Von Roon and Moltke, Prussian war minister and general respectively.

King William I decided to increase the strength of the Prussian army

and impart training on modern lines. However, his enthusiasm was not shared by a majority of liberal members in the Prussian Parliament. They believed that a lot of money would be required to add 39 new regiments to the infantry and ten of cavalry as demanded by the king. Therefore, the Prussian king's appeal to approve the new military bills went unheeded. The king went ahead with his military plans and clashed with the majority of Prussian members of Parliament. The Parliament was adamant and the king made up his mind to abdicate his throne. It was at this critical juncture, Von Roon and Moltke, advised the king to call Bismarck. Bismarck was in Paris when he received the message from the Prussian king to return to the capital immediately. On his return he was appointed chancellor of Prussia. Bismarck's appointment enraged the liberals in the Prussian Parliament. Bismarck appeared before the members of the Parliament and delivered his 'blood and iron' speech. He said that all German states looked at Prussia with great respect not because of her democratic set-up but for her strength. "The great questions of the day will not be decided by speeches and majority resolutions. . . but by blood and iron." Bismarck's appeal went in vain. However, he was not disappointed. He ordered the arrest of all opposition leaders. He advised the king to carry out his plan through ordinances. Taxes were collected forcibly and new regiments were added to the Prussian army. The Parliament became ineffective since many leaders were imprisoned.

## **Foreign Policy**

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The first task carried out by Bismarck was to establish friendship with Russia. It was a time when Russia and France were coming closer. But Bismarck created a wedge between them and made the Russians support Prussia. This he achieved by his open support to Russia when the Poles revolted against the former in 1863. Bismarck was afraid that if the Polish revolt became successful, the Poles in Prussia would also revolt. Since Russia and Prussia became friendly and the former suppressed the Polish revolt easily, France lost its credibility over this issue in Europe. She could not render effective help to the Poles in their revolt against Russia. Bismarck came to an understanding with Russia, that if a war broke out

between Prussia and Austria in the near future, he could count upon Russia's neutrality.

## War with Denmark (1864)

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Bismarck calculated that for bringing about German unification, the defeat of Denmark constituted the first phase. The question hovered over the two duchies of German Confederation, namely, Schleswig and Holstein, which was ruled by the king of Denmark. He ruled these two duchies not in his capacity as king of Denmark but as the duke of these two German states. There was a great demand in Denmark for the merger of these two German states into the Kingdom of Denmark. The king yielded to the pressure and accordingly merged these two states into his kingdom. By doing so he violated an earlier settlement reached at London. This act provoked Bismarck and he planned to bring about the military defeat of Denmark and restore the status of the two *German states to their original position*.

The Danish king imposed a new constitution upon these two duchies in violation of the London protocol. The Holsteiners protested at the separation of Schleswig and Bismarck proposed to Austria that their countries should send combined troops to defeat the Danish king and restore the status quo ante. His intention in dragging Austria into a war had a motive. He wanted to quarrel with Austria over the spoils soon after the defeat of the king of Denmark. In the meantime Bismarck made vague promises to the French king to ensure his neutrality in the event of war with Denmark. Accordingly, both Austria and Prussia together sent troops to attack the Danish kingdom and forced the king to surrender. Denmark surrendered the two duchies and they were jointly administered by Prussia and Austria. Within a year serious differences arose between the two. Austria recognised the claims of Prince Augustenburg. However, Bismarck agreed to recognise the claims of Augustenburg on certain conditions. If those conditions had been accepted, the duchies would have completely come under the control of the Prussian government. Therefore the claims of Augustenburg created a rift between Prussia and Austria and it looked as though the war would break out between the two. However, the war was averted, and

the convention of Gastein was concluded on August 14, 1865, by which Austria was to temporarily look after Holstein and Prussia, Schleswig and Lauenburg with certain rights. The convention mainly intended "to paper over the cracks". It gave Bismarck enough time to prepare his country diplomatically and militarily to wage another war in order to end Austria's hegemony over German states.

By brilliant strokes of diplomacy, Bismarck befriended Napoleon III at Biarritz with a promise of compensation if France remained neutral in case of war breaking out between Prussia and Austria. Emperor Napoleon III of France imagined that the war would be prolonged and both these countries would seek his mediation to settle the dispute. In this process he hoped to secure territorial compensation. Bismarck relied upon Russia's friendship and hoped that she would remain neutral if there was a war. He believed that Britain would not be interested in any European war so long as it did not adversely affect her interests. Bismarck proposed to King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy that he should help him by attacking Austria in the south. In the event of Prussian victory, he would compensate Italy's efforts by securing Venice for her.

## Seven Weeks' War with Austria (1866)

It was now left to him to start skirmishes to provoke Austria to declare war on Prussia. It should appear as though Prussia was defending herself from the brutal attack of Austria. With this plan in mind Bismarck picked up a quarrel with Austria by proposing a scheme of reform for the German Confederation in which Austria would not have any place. His proposal submitted to the Diet was objected to by Austria. Austria proposed to the Diet that all German states should join her in attacking Prussia and teach her a lesson. Many German states joined Austria and war was declared on Prussia. In the meantime, Bismarck convinced his ruler that Prussia was fighting purely to defend herself from the attacks of the German states led by Austria. The Prussian troops led by Moltke marched towards the Austrian borders and engaged the enemies at several places. The Prussian infantry and cavalry moved swiftly towards the targets and fought bravely. The Prussian troops fought with the breach-loading needle gun which wrought havoc upon the Austrian

troops. During the first week itself, Austria witnessed the occupation of northwestern part of Germany by the Prussian troops. In the third week the most decisive battle was fought at Sadowa (Königgrätz). It was here that the Prussian troops inflicted a crushing defeat upon Austria. The Austrian surrender became imminent, despite the fact that the Italians were beaten badly by the Austrians elsewhere. The Prussian military training, the military manoeuvres of generals, and the effective use of breach-loading needle gun may be counted upon as the factors for the success of the Prussians in the Austro-Prussian war (1866). The whole of Europe was surprised at the defeat of the mighty Austrian empire at the hands of Prussia. For Napoleon, it came as a rude shock because he had underestimated the might of Prussia.

It was a mark of Bismarck's statesmanship that he restrained the Prussian king from ordering troops to capture the Austrian capital, Vienna. He prevailed upon the king to offer Austria the most generous terms. Bismarck did not want to alienate the sympathies of Austria by inflicting harsh terms. He was already scheming for another war with France and therefore needed Austria's neutrality.

## Outcome of the War

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The Treaty of Prague was signed between Prussia and Austria. As per the terms of the treaty Austria admitted that she was guilty of causing war. Firstly, she agreed to withdraw from the supervision of the German states and pay a war indemnity of \$3,000,000 to Prussia. Secondly, Austria agreed to annex Schleswig and Holstein into the Prussian kingdom. Thirdly, she permitted the formation of the North German Confederation (consisting of German states lying north of River Maine) to come under the leadership of Prussia. Fourthly, she ceded Venice to Sardinia. As a result of this treaty, Austria did not lose much of her territory. Prussia enlarged her own kingdom with the annexation of the kingdom of Hanover, the duchies of Nassau and Hesse Cassel and the free city of Frankfurt. With these additions Prussia's population increased by four and a half million subjects.

The Old German Confederation was abolished, and in its place Bismarck established the North German Confederation under the

leadership of the king of Prussia. The North German Confederation was mainly composed of all German states lying north of the River Maine. There were a few southern German states like Bavaria, Baden, Wurtenberg which did not join the North German Confederation out of respect for their subjects' local sentiments. Therefore, Bismarck did not force them to join his organisation. He knew that there would come a time when these states would like to merge themselves with the North German Confederation. However, these southern states signed military agreements with Prussia for their protection in case of a war breaking out with neighbouring powers. The Prussian king who became the President of the North German Confederation appointed Bismarck the Chancellor in 1871. Bismarck's spectacular diplomatic and military victories silenced forever the protests of his opponents at home. Bismarck achieved his first goal by eliminating Austria from the leadership of German states. But his work still remained incomplete. Some southern German states were yet to make up their minds to join the North German Confederation. To accomplish this task he decided to wage war against France.

## Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)

When Austria was beaten at Sadowa in 1866, a French Marshal named Randon exclaimed, "It is France that is beaten at Sadowa." His statement needs elaboration. It must be remembered that Napoleon had his own plan for expansion at the cost of the two belligerents, Prussia and Austria. When the Austro-Prussian war broke out he thought that it would be a long war. He expected that both would be exhausted in the end and would request him to mediate in their dispute. At that time he thought he would ask Bismarck to fulfil his promise of future compensation. However, all his plans came to nothing when he heard that Prussia had easily beaten Austria within seven weeks. His expected role did not materialise. Prussia had suddenly become a big power. It was this fact which made the French emperor jealous and suspicious. Bismarck did not write to him or offer to give compensation. Therefore, he felt very much humiliated. Bismarck outwitting Napoleon deeply hurt the feeling of French citizens who now cried for revenge. The relations between Prussia and France touched its lowest ebb, and more so due to

jealousy and suspicion on the part of the French politicians. Bismarck did nothing to improve the relations because he desired that the state of things should be in flux. He did not offer compensation to the Austro-Prussian war. However, he received letters from the French emperor demanding compensation. He kept those letters with him to use them at an opportune moment.

The war with France was essential in that it would create necessary conditions for the southern German states to join the North German Confederation and thus bring about the total unification of Germany. He was waiting for an opportunity to create these conditions whereby France would be compelled to declare war upon Prussia.

The quarrel between France and Prussia arose over the issue of Spanish succession. The Spanish throne fell vacant and it was offered to a relative of the king of Prussia at the instance of Bismarck. After rejecting the Crown twice, Prince Leopold accepted it finally. His action provoked France since she did not like to see Prussia becoming dangerously strong on both sides of her borders. Therefore, a strongly worded note was sent to the Prussian king stating that the acceptance of the Spanish crown by his relative would in all probability cause war. The Prussian king urged his relative not to accept the Spanish crown. Accordingly, Prince Leopold declined the offer. The French were overjoyed at their diplomatic victory. Bismarck, who was working behind the scene, was disappointed at the turn of events. However, his luck did not desert him, as future events proved.

The Duc de Gramont, the French foreign minister, was not satisfied. What would happen if another relative of the Prussian king accepted the Spanish crown? Therefore, he sent a wire to his ambassador Benedetti at Ems to see the Prussian king immediately and get a proper assurance. Accordingly, Benedetti met the Prussian king there to seek reassurance, but the king politely declined to meet the French ambassador on this issue. The topic of their discussion was sent to Bismarck in the famous 'Ems Telegram'. Bismarck received it when he was dining with Von Roon and Moltke. He found an opportunity to twist the meaning of the telegram to suit his objective to bring about a war between Prussia and France. He informed the press that the Prussian king, on hearing about the demand of the French ambassador, had decided not to receive him to

discuss the issue. In other words, the Prussian king, by not seeing the ambassador on the issue of Spanish crown, had insulted France. Thus Bismarck succeeded in provoking France to declare war on Prussia.

## Fall of the Second French Empire

After two days of heated discussion in the French ministry, the French emperor declared war. The remarkable striking power of the Prussian army led by Von Roon and Moltke and the excellent Bismarckian diplomacy astonished Europe. Almost all the major powers in Europe, including Austria, remained neutral when the war broke out, thus leaving Bismarck to carry on his war with France without any interference. Bismarck humoured the Russian Czar by giving him a hint that he could violate the irritant clauses of the Black Sea Treaty signed in Paris. He revealed the evil designs of the French emperor to the neighbouring small states by publishing the Napoleonic letters addressed to him. Thus he achieved his objective of isolating France from the rest of Europe on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war. When the war broke out, the southern German states joined the North German Confederation thus bringing about the total unification of Germany. With clockwork precision the German troops crossed the French borders and engaged the disorganised French army at several places. The Prussian army consisting of 4,50,000 soldiers split into three groups and engaged the French at several places and inflicted crushing blows. The French lost Alsace to the invading Prussian forces. The French commanders committed blunders, one after another which resulted in routs. They were forced to retreat to Metz. They also withdrew their troops to the Lorraine fortress. The French General, MacMahon was sent along with the emperor for the relief of Metz. His attempt to offer relief to Metz was foiled by General Moltke. Therefore, MacMahon was driven to the northern border. Unfortunately his forces were surrounded on all sides by the German troops at Sedan on September 1, 1870. The French emperor who had followed him was also forced to surrender to the German troops. With his surrender, the second French empire fell.

The German troops moved on to capture the French capital, Paris, where spirited resistance was offered to the invading German troops for

nearly four months. However, their efforts were in vain. In the meantime, the German troops captured Metz in October 1870. The capitulation of Metz was followed by the capitulation of the French capital, Paris, despite the heroic resistance offered by brave French citizens like Gambetta.

## **Treaty of Frankfurt**

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The leader of the provisional government of France, Thiers, negotiated the peace terms. The Treaty of Frankfurt was signed on May 10, 1871. According to the terms of the treaty, France had to cede Alsace and a part of Lorraine including Metz and Strasburg. Furthermore, she agreed to pay a war indemnity of \$200,000,000 over a period of three years. The German troops could stay on at French expense till the amount was paid fully.

## **Results of Franco-Prussian War**

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The direct outcome of the war was the unification of Germany. "Germany became the mistress of Europe and Bismarck master of Germany." In the wake of the unification of Germany, the unification of Italy was also achieved at the same time. The French garrison guarding Rome was withdrawn by the French emperor when the Franco-Prussian war broke out. On hearing of the fall of the Second French empire, the Italian army entered papal territory and occupied Rome (September 11, 1870). Subsequently, a plebiscite was held which showed that the people desired merger with the rest of Italy. King Victor Emmanuel II entered the capital in July 1872.

The final act of the Franco-Prussian episode ended with Bismarck crowning the Prussian king, William, as Emperor of Germany, in the famous Hall of Mirrors, at Versailles on January 18, 1871. The birth of the German empire heralded a new era in the history of modern Europe.

## Suggested Readings

1. Dawson, W.H., *Evolution of Modern Germany*.
2. Gooch, C.P., *Germany*.
3. Taylor, A.J.P., *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman*.
4. Ibid, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe (1848-1918)*.
5. Eyck, E., *Bismarck and the German Empire*.

## Second Republic and Second Empire

*A*fter the fall of the Orleans monarchy in France, there was some confusion among the politicians regarding the form of government to be established. Lamartine, a popular representative of the intellectual middle class, showed his eagerness to form a republic for sentimental reasons. The working class of Paris, which suffered considerably under Louis Philippe's monarchy, was represented by Louis Blanc, a famous socialist, and he was also keen to see a republic established because it would be in a position to pass necessary measures to improve conditions of the labour class. Whatever may be the desire of the above classes, there was yet another class, the peasantry and small landowners, conservative in outlook, who were suspicious of the Republic creating a climate of political instability. It was this class which had given support to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. Subsequently, it will be observed, that it was this class which gave overwhelming support to the rise of Louis Napoleon in 1848.

After announcing that a Republic was formed, Lamartine, the poet, announced the names of liberal Parliamentarians who would form a new provisional government. They included Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin and Dupont de l'Eure. But subsequently, the Paris mob forced Lamartine to include the names of Louis Blanc, the famous socialist, and Albert, the working man. Thus the provisional government was composed of two elements – the moderate liberals and the radical democrats and socialists. Yielding to the pressure of the Paris mob the new government released the extremists from prison. Again, due to the pressure of radical democrats and socialists on one side and the armed Paris mob on the other, the provisional government had to introduce social and political

reforms. After recognising the 'right to work' the government set up national workshops to deal with the problem of unemployment in Paris. But it was not the type Louis Blanc had suggested. To pacify the working class the government reduced the working hours. It set up a Permanent Commission under the presidency of Louis Blanc to devise schemes to solve the unemployment problem in the country. This commission went ahead with its task of finding jobs for thousands of unemployed by forming hundreds of cooperative societies. The provisional government removed restrictions on the press and on the liberty of the individual citizen. It announced elections to a National Constituent Assembly. All Frenchmen above the age of 21 were made eligible to vote. By this last act the strength of the electorate increased from a mere 200,000 to nearly 900,000.

In the meanwhile, the Paris mob posed a great threat to the existence of the provisional government. A few attempts were made by the Socialist-led revolutionaries to overthrow it. However, these attempts proved futile. General elections were held on 23rd and 24th of April, and the National Assembly met in May. The election results showed that moderate liberals and royalists gained an overwhelming lead and the radicals and socialists could win only 100 seats. The peasants and small landowners had shown their antipathy towards the disorders and socialist experiments of Paris.

The provisional government, after handing over its charge to the newly elected National Assembly, resigned. It met on 4 May and began to exercise its authority. It elected an executive committee to discharge the duties of the government. Louis Blanc and Albert were excluded from the committee and this enraged the Paris mob. The new Assembly had to grapple with the problem of setting up of workshops to employ the jobless. As the doors of the workshops were opened, thousands of unemployed rushed to seek jobs. On two francs a day, numerous people were employed on jobs like paving roads, replanting trees, building of railway stations and the like. The Assembly realised that it would be unable to provide jobs for many who were coming to the city, and therefore, modified the scheme. It proposed to the workers who had already joined, and also to those job seekers, to join the army or clear the land in the provinces. The National Assembly was compelled to do this

because the National Workshop Scheme was becoming too expensive for it to carry on. It was afraid of alienating the sympathies of the tax-paying middle classes, with whose financial support, the National Workshop Scheme was started. Therefore, the Government shelved this scheme rendering thousands of workers jobless. The workers of Paris raised the banner of revolt.

Bloody riots broke out in Paris and other important cities. The Assembly was invaded by the Paris mob and the workers tried to set up a new emergency government under Blanqui and Barbes. But this time, the National Guards supported the National Assembly. The Paris mob was cleared from the assembly premises and many of its leaders were thrown into prison. Louis Blanc fled France and Albert was arrested. Proudhon was imprisoned. General Cavaignac was successful in quelling the revolt. It appeared as though socialism had been destroyed during the same year when the *Communist Manifesto* was being drafted by Marx and Engels. General Cavaignac was appointed President of the Council by the Assembly. A new commander was appointed to head the National Guards. Journals and clubs which were critical of the government's attitude were closed down. In October 1848 the National Assembly framed a new constitution providing for a unicameral legislature and a one-term presidency, both to be directly elected by universal suffrage. The president, so chosen was to enjoy his office for one term and was not eligible to run for the second term. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president of the French republic with 54,00,000 votes. His rivals Cavaignac and Lamartine trailed behind with 14,00,000 and 17,000 votes respectively.

### Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-73)

The urban elites hardly expected Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (as Emperor Napoleon III during the period 1852-70) to win the presidential race despite the fact that he was the nephew of Napoleon the Great. To say the least he became the laughing stock of France by making ridiculous and futile attempts to overthrow the Orleans monarchy in 1836 and 1840. As heir of his uncle's throne he firmly believed that he should carry out the unfinished task of his uncle to its logical end. His romantic career

began in 1831 when he joined the Italian secret society, the *Carbonari*, and plotted to overthrow the papal rule in Rome. But it failed. He escaped prison disguised as a footman. In 1832, his brother Napoleon II died, and Louis Napoleon regarded himself as the heir of Bonapartist legacy. He was considered undesirable in France and therefore stayed in England. It was there that he began working for a plan to overthrow the monarchy of Louis Philippe and revive his uncle's empire in France. He made his first attempt to assert his claim in 1836 by stirring up the Bonapartist regiment at Strasburg to revolt. But the revolt was crushed easily and Louis Napoleon was arrested. King Louis Philippe did not take much notice and got him expelled to America. It was not long before he was recalled to Switzerland where his mother was on her deathbed. France demanded his expulsion and he was forced to stay in England.

He attracted the attention of his compatriots when he released his book *Des Indies Napoléoniennes* wherein he declared that destiny had appointed him to resume the throne of France to complete the unfinished task of his uncle. In 1840 he made another attempt to conquer France with 50 men and a captive vulture by landing at Boulogne. His so-called invasion failed miserably and his boat capsized while he attempted to escape. He was arrested and impeached. During the trial he impressively argued that the mandate which confirmed his uncle to rule France as emperor had not been revoked and therefore he, as his uncle's heir, should be ruling. Louis Philippe's government treated his case leniently and confined him to the fortress of Ham. He spent the next six years by taking to writing. His work, *Fragments Historiques*, was written to "refute Guizot's attempted parallel between the English Revolution of 1688 and the July Revolution in France". He wrote a series of articles to make himself popular with certain classes of French population. In 1844, he published another work, *The Extinction of Pauperism*, calculated to endear himself to the working class. In this work he explained how unemployment had become a bane of the nation and how it could be solved. Disguised as a workman, he escaped from prison in 1846. Safe in London he showed his penchant for law and order by joining the police force during the Chartist movement. On hearing the news that revolution had broken out in 1848, he returned to France. He offered his cooperation to the newly formed government but it ordered him to quit the country

within 24 hours. He returned in June and got elected to the Assembly when by-elections were held. His opponents, who included Thiers, did not consider him important enough and treated him with contempt. In return for their contempt Louis Napoleon resigned his seat. But he said should people impose duties on him he knew how to fulfil them. In the by-election held during the month of September, Louis Napoleon was re-elected. He took his seat and subsequently contested the presidential election.

He was elected to the presidency by more than 500,000 votes. More than anything else, the election result indicated the common people's confidence and faith in the Napoleonic regime because it assured political stability the country so badly needed at this critical juncture.

According to the republican constitution, the President was elected for a term of four years only and he was barred from seeking election for a second term. As head of the state, he was to exercise both civil and military authority. He had to nominate ministers who would serve in that capacity to the satisfaction of the President and their services could be dispensed with at any time. The provinces lost much of their autonomy since their prefects were all appointed by the president. All the mayors and presidents of municipalities were appointed by the president. The legislature consisting of the Council and the Senate was reduced to impotence. The judiciary too lost its importance and merely became an appendage of the state.

Although armed with enormous powers the President exercised caution lest his rule become arbitrary and unpopular. He was at his wit's end in finding ways to overcome the constitutional restraint placed upon him for his reflection to the second term. He carefully planned to overcome this impediment. It became necessary that he remain extremely popular during the tenure of his office. While his opponents were mocking at him that he would not last, Louis Napoleon aimed at keeping himself the focus of public attention by his itineraries. He visited almost every city or town in France and ensured that all slums were removed. He instructed the officers to mitigate the sufferings of the poor. He championed the cause of the enfranchisement of nearly 30,00,000 casual labourers in France who were denied this privilege by the assembly because they did not have permanent residence. He initiated many

projects such as construction of railroads, harbours and canals. He introduced model-farming, sanitation and drainage systems to improve the conditions of the common people.

His opponents considered all these reforms of the President as political stunts and Thiers declared at one time "before a month is up, we will have Louis Bonaparte under lock and key". But the President had other plans to keep them out of mischief. He carried out a brilliantly engineered coup in the early hours of December 3, the day next to the anniversary of Austerlitz by ordering separately 78 police officers to arrest 78 opposition leaders. On the same day the newspapers carried two proclamations of Louis Napoleon addressed to the people and the army, of his wish to remain president for the next 10 years followed by a decree announcing the dissolution of the Assembly and the repeal of May laws. He declared a universal suffrage for the people of France and asked them to express their approval of his action through a plebiscite to be held shortly. Although there were some disturbances at some places resulting in the death of 600 soldiers, civilian law and order was restored soon.

A plebiscite was held as promised in which 74,00,000 votes were cast approving his action and 6,00,000 against. Overwhelmed with joy the president declared that "France has realised that I broke the law only to do what was right. The votes of over 70,00,000 have just granted me absolution." The president shifted his residence to the Tuileries and promulgated a new constitution. During the next year France witnessed the ushering in of several reforms such as housing schemes for the poor, abolition of Sunday labour, and the construction of baths, washhouses, and so on. He attracted the attention of the common people by his famous tours and inspections. It was not long before many important bodies began to urge him to become an emperor. The president was too ready to fulfil their desire. Accordingly, on December 2, 1852, the president by a proclamation declared himself to be the emperor of France. He requested the people to approve his action in the ensuing plebiscite. Nearly 78,00,000 voted in his favour and 2,50,000 against him. The immediate impact was that the French Parliament became a mere consultative body without any real power to check the president.

## The Constitution of the Second Empire

Under the new constitution all the authority was vested in the hands of the emperor. He could make war and peace, sign treaties, initiate legislations and extend pardon. He appointed ministers who enjoyed office at his pleasure and they were individually responsible to him. The chamber of deputies consisted of the representatives of the common people, but here the emperor managed to get his nominated candidates elected in the polls through political manoeuvres. The emperor ran the local governments in France through prefects appointed by him. The mayors and deputy mayors were also nominated by the government to look after the communes.

He restored the influence of the church on educational system. Religious teaching was encouraged and grants were made by the state to the Catholic church. During all festivals organised by the Catholic church, the government was represented. Many of the old privileges enjoyed by the Catholic church were restored. Thus the alliance between the church and the state was established.

## The Court Life

Reminiscent of the splendour of his uncle's days Napoleon III revived the court life. He married Eugenie Contesse de Teba, a beautiful and charming Spanish lady of noble birth, to add to the grace of his court. The splendour of his court was enhanced by the presence of most eminent poets, littérateurs, academicians and scientists. The most prominent figures who flocked to his court included Pasteur, Verdi and Gautier. Operas and music performances kept the courtiers entertained and even the pleasure-loving Englishmen frequently visited France to enjoy their holidays.

## Foreign Policy

In spite of the emperor's proclaimed policy of peace with the neighbours, everybody in France expected that he would carry out the foreign policy with vigour, initiative and drive so as to revive its glory. After the fall of his uncle, France had lost its position as the leader of Europe and it was

hoped that he would repair this situation. Besides his own ambition to rise to great heights of power, he was encouraged to undertake adventurous pursuits like his uncle by the Bonapartists and army commanders. The first undertaking led by him was the Crimean War (1854-56), and it gave him the first taste of success.

The Russian Czar, Nicholas I, had grievously wronged him by not addressing him 'brother' in the customary manner as prevailed among the European royalty. Since then the French emperor had turned hostile towards Russia and had been waiting for an opportunity to settle his score. Wherever opportunities arose he decided that France should put forward her claims and rights. In this frame of mind he now found an opportunity to put forward France's right to the guardianship of the Holy Places in the Turkish empire. He was supported by various Catholic powers. The Sultan almost agreed since France had enjoyed this right since the days of Emperor Charlamagne. But his acceptance irked the Czar since his country had enjoyed this right all along. Now the Czar demanded not only the recognition of whatever right his country was enjoying—the guardianship of the Holy Places by the Greek monks—but extended this further to include the protection of all the Sultan's Christian subjects. The Sultan was hardly in a position to oblige the Czar since it might mean recognising Russia's right to interfere in her (Turkey) internal affairs. Prompted by Emperor Napoleon III and Britain, the Sultan expressed his unwillingness to the Czar. The Russian troops then crossed the Pruth and occupied the Danubian principalities. Russia refused to vacate the occupied lands on Turkey's demand. Hostilities broke out between the two and the Turkish fleet swung into action against Russia. However, in subsequent engagements, it met with disaster. The Russian fleet easily sunk the Turkish fleet—often called the Sinope massacre—and Turkish allies had to come to her rescue. The Crimean War broke out between Russia on the one side and Turkey supported by Britain, France and later Piedmont on the other. The allies committed many a blunder in the course of the war which demoralised their armies. After circumventing insurmountable odds, the allies finally succeeded in routing the Russians and captured Sebastopol with heavy casualties. They finally won the war and Russia sued for peace in 1856. She accepted the neutralisation of the Black Sea by signing the Treaty of

Paris.

## Intervention in Italy

After having tasted victory in his first foreign venture, the French emperor entertained great ambitions of achieving personal glory through wars and further expansion of the empire. Although he lacked the capacity and tenacity of his uncle he looked forward to the days when France would reign supreme over Europe. When Count Cavour, the prime minister of the kingdom of Piedmont in Italy, appealed to the French emperor or English for assistance to liberate Italy, it struck a deep chord of sympathy (being a Carbonari himself in his early career), for that unfortunate country. It was not until Orsini (an Italian bandit) made an attempt to assassinate him that the French emperor decided to render the required assistance. A secret meeting took place between him and the Piedmontese statesman at Plombieres, resulting in the former agreeing to assist the latter with a French army to liberate northern Italy. In return Cavour promised to cede Nice and Savoy. Napoleon III was aware that he would be deeply offending the clerical party in his country which did not want the papal rule in Italy to be disturbed. But the emperor knew that the liberals in France would support his action.

Cavour arranged 'border incidents' which provoked Austria to declare war on Piedmont in 1859. He appealed to the French emperor to render the promised assistance. The French emperor personally commanded the French army and won two splendid victories over the Austrians in the battles at Magenta and Solferine. Lombardy was liberated but Venice remained in Austrian hands. It was then that the French emperor suddenly withdrew his army after concluding an armistice of Villafranca with the Austrians.

The emperor's action caused great disappointment to the Italians. For Cavour it was a stunning blow since he dreamed of unifying northern Italy at one stroke. Napoleon's motives in concluding the armistice of Villafranca without giving notice to Cavour has been a subject of much speculation among historians. For the present, it may be said that the emperor was afraid of provoking the clergy at home who were anxious to see that the Pope's hold over Italy was not endangered. Napoleon also

feared that an outside intervention would make his position risky in France. In the end his adventure in Italy disappointed many liberals since he could not bring about a logical conclusion to this affair, and caused great provocation to the clergy at home. They vehemently condemned his policy which was against the interests of the Pope. The only consolation the French derived was that they received Nice and Savoy.

## The Mexican Imbroglio (1861-67)

Plagued by a civil war in the 1850s, the Republic of Mexico defaulted on repayment of its debts and also the interest on bonds held by European powers, which provided them a good opportunity to interfere in its internal affairs. In 1861, the Republican leader of that country, Benito Juarez, defeated his rival, Miramon, who represented the clerics and monarchists. Miramon appealed to European powers to come to his rescue. Napoleon III was quick to respond. He proposed to Britain and Spain for sending a joint expedition to subdue the Mexican Republic to enforce payment. These two powers agreed and a joint expedition was undertaken. It succeeded in achieving its objective. While the two powers pulled out their troops from Mexico, the French troops stayed on to carry out the grand design of their emperor. At the instance of Empress Eugenie, he desired to substitute the Republic in Mexico with a Catholic empire led by Maximilian, the brother of the Austrian emperor. Since the Mexican Republic was torn by political factions, it became easy for the French troops to subdue the revolt and enthroned Maximilian. This pleased the clergy and the Catholic powers.

After having overcome the local resistance in 1864, he did not foresee any danger other than the overthrow of Maximilian. For that purpose, he stationed French troops in Mexico to remain as standby.

However, after the conclusion of the American Civil War (1865), the United States of America became aware of the violation of the Monroe Doctrine by France and found it necessary to reiterate it. Taking the cue, the French emperor found an excuse to pull the French troops out of Mexico leaving Maximilian in the lurch. Without the French support, Maximilian had no chance of survival in a country where people had decided to overthrow him. He was captured by the enemies and shot

dead. Thus Napoleon's adventure in Mexico did not earn him plaudits either from the Catholics or the liberals. In the words of Lipson, "The Mexican incident, more than anything else in Napoleon's reign, served to illustrate the unstable imagination of the emperor, his passion for grandiose and fantastic schemes, and lack of forethought and iron resolution to carry his schemes to a successful conclusion."

## **France and the Polish Insurrection (1863)**

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Unable to tolerate the tyranny of the Russian rule over their country, the Poles rose in revolt. It was here that the French emperor was provided with a wonderful opportunity to rally round all the political factions in his country to a cause—the liberation of Poland. He could do no more than lodge protest at Russia's tyranny. Russia supported by Prussia's Bismarck hardly bothered to pay heed to these remonstrances. The French emperor lost the sympathy of not only his countrymen but also caused a great deal of annoyance to Russia and Britain.

## **Napoleon III and the Austro-Prussian War**

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While the Mexican episode left a bitter taste in the mouth of the French, their emperor sought to retrieve his prestige (he had lost in America) in Europe now. He got the opportunity at an interview with the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck, in 1865, at Biarritz. The Prussian chancellor told the French emperor of the impending war with Austria and sought the latter's neutrality. As a price for this he was prepared to consider "the enlargement of France" with a promise of future compensation. Dazzled by this inducement the French emperor gave his tacit consent. The flaw in the whole scheme was that Bismarck did not commit his future compensation to paper and Napoleon was subsequently fooled by this crafty Prussian chancellor. The French emperor presumed that the war between these two powers would go on for months and it would give him an opportunity to mediate. When the Prussian army marched into Bohemia with tremendous rapidity, Austria was scared and begged Napoleon to mediate. But the French emperor was too confused to act and let go this opportunity. The result was that Austria was defeated within seven weeks and forced to sign the treaty of Prague. Prussia's

victory over Austria roused “sentiments of rage, jealousy, and apprehension” in France, and French Marshal Randon said, “It is France who has been defeated at Sadowa.” With Austria giving up her control over the German states, and many of joining Prussia, the whole balance of power in Europe tilted in favour of Prussia. The French began to blame their emperor for his costly diplomatic debacle. French animosity towards Prussia reached hysterical proportions as subsequent events were to prove. It now remained only appropriate for the emperor to put forward his demand in secrecy regarding the compensation the Prussian chancellor had promised. Unfortunately, the chancellor seemed to have forgotten his promise.

During the last years of his career, the French emperor was in ill-health. He was fast losing his nerve and capacity to rise to occasions. He turned himself into a constitutional monarch by granting all the concessions, the press and the public had demanded. He became a butt of ridicule and all the political parties took maximum advantage of his weakness. His empire collapsed after a military disaster.

## The Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)

The war broke out on the issue of Spanish succession. In July 1870 it was reported in the press that a distant relative of the king of Prussia, Prince Leopold, had accepted offer of the crown of Spain. Before this reported incident the same offer had been discussed in Berlin and the offer was rejected since France had objected. The offer was renewed and accepted and the French government believed that Bismarck must be “at the bottom of yet another plot to humiliate the French people”. The press and the public in France violently reacted to this outrage, and demanded that France declare war if the Prussian king did not decline this offer. To the great surprise of France, Prince Anthony, father of Prince Leopold, openly declined the offer of the vacant Spanish throne on behalf of his son. It seemed that the matter which bedevilled the relations between these two countries was at last settled. Unfortunately, this was not to be. There were at least two persons in France, namely, Empress Eugenie and the Duc de Gramont, who were not at all satisfied and therefore pined for war. The latter demanded that the emperor should receive a definite

guarantee from the Prussian king that his relative's candidature for the Spanish throne would never be renewed again.

Diplomatic moves were set afoot. The French ambassador in Prussia, Benedetti, was directed to meet the Prussian king, and get the required assurance. The ambassador met him on the Promenade at Ems and the king was polite enough to assure him that Prince Leopold had withdrawn his candidature and he had consented, but the king refused to say anything further. The Prussian king sent a telegram—the famous Ems telegram—to Bismarck about what transpired between him and the French ambassador. Bismarck, who was eager to fight the French, altered the message of the Ems telegram in such a way that it provoked the French to declare a war. When it was altered by Bismarck the message implied that the Prussian king had deliberately insulted the French ambassador.

After two days of parleys with his ministers the French emperor declared war. On the eve of the war Bismarck released to the press letters about Napoleon's demand of compensation, that was the territory of Belgium, as a price of France's neutrality on the eve of the Austro-Prussian war. The Prussian or German forces consisting of 4,50,000 men were divided into three groups, and each launched a swift offensive with ruthless efficiency. They swept away all the feeble resistance offered by the French army and inflicted crushing defeats at Strasbourg, Sedan and Metz. The second French empire ended in a tragic finale with the personal surrender of the emperor on September 2, 1870 with 83,000 men under his command. The state of war continued till the final capitulation of French capital, Paris (January 1871). Bismarck forced France to sign the treaty of Frankfurt (May 1871) by which she was compelled to cede Alsace and part of Lorraine, and pay an indemnity of 5,000 million francs. To add insult to injury, Bismarck crowned his master, King William I, as *Kaiser* of Germany in the famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles Palace. For France it was an unforgettable humiliation and her people cried for *ravanche* (revenge).

The aftermath of the war was the unification of two countries in Europe—Germany and Italy. Before the Franco-Prussian war broke out, the South German states, afraid of French menace, wisely decided to throw in their lot with the other German counterparts under the

leadership of Prussia. The unification of Italy was achieved when the French troops guarding the Papal states were withdrawn and the Pope was left defenseless. The people there desired merger with the rest of liberated Italy. France stood isolated since Bismarck revealed the grand design of the French emperor. It enraged Britain and she did not bother to stop the war in order to save Napoleon III. The birth of the German Empire under the leadership of Bismarck heralded a new era in the art of modern war and diplomacy in Europe.

## Suggested Readings

1. Gooch Brison, D. (ed), *Napoleon III – A Man of Destiny*.
2. Guerard, A., *The Napoleonic Legend*.
3. Simpson, F.A., *The Rise of Louis Napoleon*.
4. Thompson, J.M., *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire*.

# 12

## The Eastern Question

*T*he Eastern Question haunted the minds of European statesmen from the early nineteenth century to the Great War. They were concerned about the decay of the Ottoman empire. The decline of the Ottoman empire was creating many problems in terms of balance of power in Europe and the rise of Christian Balkan nationalities. Interspersed with this situation were the conflicting ambitions of rival powers in Europe to share the spoils of the tottering empire.

The Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1453. In their new zeal to spread Islam to every nook and corner of the world, they embarked upon a career of conquests. Their empire extended from southern Spain in the west to India in the east and included the Balkan countries and a major part of Austria and Hungary. However, after the initial tide of success, their power began to decline due to weak successors ascending the throne. Secondly, the conquered races in the Balkans, being mainly Slavs and Christians, were not absorbed into the mainstream of Turkish national life. The Turks remained masters, and behaved in an insolent and cruel manner with the Balkan Christians. Since none of the European nations came to their rescue, these Christian countries were resigned to their fate.

Meanwhile, Russia expanded her empire towards the south under Peter the Great and Catherine and her border came close to the Turkish borders. By the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (1774), the Turks not only pacified the Russians but also offered many concessions to the Christian subjects. After this treaty the Russians withdrew from Turkish provinces, but the whole episode exposed the cracks appearing in the Ottoman empire. Russia was the first country to observe the decline of this once

great empire and was quite concerned about it. To the European powers, the weakness of the Ottoman empire became visible in 1821, that was the starting point in the Greek War of Independence. Even before the outbreak of this war, the Serbians were the first to stage a revolt in 1804, and by 1817 obtained autonomy from the Turkish master under a hereditary prince of native Obrenovitch dynasty. Ten years later, the Ottoman Empire was placed under the protection of Russia.

## **Greek War of Independence (1821–32)**

The Greeks were fortunate among all the Balkan nationalities in being treated kindly by their master. They even occupied some important positions in the civil administration, the Turkish foreign office and in the Turkish navy. They were allowed some measure of autonomy on the condition of payment of tribute to the Turkish emperor. The patriarch of their church was recognised. Despite these concessions, the Greeks were influenced by events taking place in the western part of Europe, namely, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The Congress of Vienna did not do much to recognise their separate identity from the rest of the Turkish empire.

However, at the end of the eighteenth century, the Greeks became conscious of their ancient glory and resented the foreign yoke. They came to be influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution spread by a secret society. *Philike Hetairia* was another organisation which was founded to spread their Hellenic glory and aimed at the expulsion of the Turks from their native land.

When there was dispute between the Porte (Turkish emperor) and his vassal, Ali Pasha, the Greeks took advantage of the situation and rose in revolt in 1821. Depending upon Russian support, Prince Hysilanti raised a banner of revolt in Moldavia. Although he was an officer in the Russian army and as such expected Russian help, he could not get any. Even the subjects were not enthusiastic in making the revolt successful. As such the revolt was brutally suppressed and he fled. Though this first attempt ended in disaster, nevertheless, the revolt spread to other areas, particularly to the district of Morea. Here the Greeks killed the Moslems which rebounded in the massacres of Greeks in Macedonia and Thessaly.

The Turks sold Christian women to slavery and executed the Greek patriarch of Constantinople and three archbishops on the Easter Day. The senseless massacres carried on by both sides only exacerbated the feelings of hatred, and the tyranny of the Turks attracted attention of the Christian west.

The war went on till 1824, and the Sultan requested his vassal, Mehemet Ali of Egypt, to help him to put down the revolt of the Greeks. Accordingly, the Egyptian governor sent his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to restore Turkish authority in Greece. Ibrahim's savagery knew no bounds. The Christians were butchered and their homes burnt. The Greek resistance failed. Missolonghi and Athens were captured one after another in 1826 and 1827 respectively. Lord Byron (the famous English poet) participated in the Greek revolt and subsequently died of fever. Philhellenic clubs were founded in Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland for espousing the cause of Greek independence. The Greek defeats followed by wanton brutality of the Turks created an international problem. Czar Alexander proposed that Russia should intervene to bring about some settlement, but Metternich and Castlereagh restrained him at the Congress of Verona.

France, Britain and Russia decided to intervene to save Greece from further Turkish barbarity. They sent a note to the Sultan that Greece be accorded autonomous status within the Turkish sovereignty. When the Sultan refused to comply with their demands, a joint naval force was despatched which destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets after a confrontation at Navarino Bay (1827). Sultan Ibrahim agreed to evacuate the Turkish troops from Morea and thus the Greeks won the first round. It was not until Russia hit hard that the Sultan agreed to recognise the independence of Greece by the treaty of Adrianople (1829). According to this treaty, Greece became independent but was to remain under the nominal Turkish overlordship. In 1832, a final treaty was concluded by which Greece came to have an independent monarchy. The Prince of Bavaria, named Otto, was chosen king of Greece and "the first great hole had been made in the rotting fabric of the Ottoman empire". The first phase of the Eastern Question thus came to an end.

## Syrian Question

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The second phase of the Eastern Question was centred upon the Syrian question. Mehemet Ali of Egypt did not get anything for his assistance rendered to the Turkish master over the Greek question. The province of Syria was promised to him at the time of the Greek war of independence in exchange for his assistance. Since the Sultan kept quiet, Mehemet Ali launched an expedition to conquer Syria. The Sultan resisted his attempts by sending his forces, but in vain. The Egyptian forces not only conquered the province of Syria but proceeded towards the Turkish capital, Constantinople. The Sultan was terribly frightened and turned towards his European neighbours. Only Russia was prepared to help him and a Turkish minister described this situation as "a drowning man will clutch at serpent". With Russia's offer of help, the other European powers became suspicious and joined in to help the Sultan. But the Sultan thought of abandoning the defence of Syria on account of the pressure from Britain, France and Austria.

In 1833, the claim of Mehemet Ali to Syria was conceded. Russia ordered Turkey to conclude a treaty of friendship with her. The treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi was signed in 1833, which contained a secret clause, that on Russia's demand, Turkey would close the Dardanelles to the warships of other nations. The leakage of the secret clause by an enraged Turkish diplomat led to international repercussions. Russia's diplomatic victory and deception hurt Britain. She waited for an opportunity to settle her score with Russia. In 1839, the Sultan backed by Russia invaded Syria to take revenge upon his vassal, Mehemet Ali of Egypt. Unfortunately his adventure did not succeed. The Turkish fleet surrendered to Mehemet Ali without fighting. The European powers once again intervened to bring about a compromise between Turkey and Egypt. They failed in their efforts due to the defiance of Mehemet Ali. Mehemet Ali was not satisfied with mere Pashalik of Egypt and half of Syria that was offered to him as terms of the treaty. France was backing him in his rigid stand. So the allied forces fought and defeated him. He was brought to his senses and Syria was handed over to the Sultan.

It was not until 1840 that Britain turned the tables against Russia and France. The straits convention was signed during that year for the pacification of the Levant among Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria.

The four powers agreed that Mehemet Ali should regain the hereditary Pashalik of Egypt. Furthermore, the straits should be closed to the ships of all nations during the time of peace. The treaty aimed at checking the growing ambitions of Russia and France in the Turkish-Egyptian conflict. France under Thiers fretted and fumed for she considered Mehemet Ali as her protege, but wisely decided not to go to war with Britain on this issue.

## **The Crimean War (1854-56)**

The Eastern Question entered into a most crucial phase with the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 between Russia on one side and France, Britain and Turkey on the other. The main cause for the outbreak of this war was the distrust of the Russian intention on Turkey. Russia had been very close to Turkey since the signing of the straits convention and the European powers were feeling uncomfortable after the Czar's proposal. It was submitted to Britain twice, in 1844 and 1853, for the partition of the decaying Turkish empire among themselves. This proposal did not find favourable response from Britain since she considered that 'the sickman of Europe', as the Czar often described the Ottoman empire, was not actually sick. Distrust and suspicion about Russia's intention further separated the two powers on many matters. The Russian Czar again proposed to Britain that he would take Constantinople, and Britain could take Egypt and Crete. In earlier days neither Prince Metternich nor Lord Palmerstone evinced keen interest in these bargains since both desired the continuation of the Ottoman empire as a bulwark against future Russian expansionism.

## **Causes of the Crimean War**

It was around 1850 that France under Emperor Napoleon III stirred the hornet's nest by reviving the claim of the French to the guardianship of the holy Christian places in the Turkish empire. It may be remembered that this privilege was enjoyed by Charlemagne long ago, but after his death, the French rulers neglected to renew their claims. Therefore, the actual guardianship of the holy places fell into the hands of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Ottoman emperor in his usual manner agreed to

restore the claims of the French for the protection of the holy places of Christianity within his empire. The Turkish recognition to French claims caused great anxiety to the Russians. They protested loudly at the counter-claims of France and the consent given by the Turkish emperor. They put pressure on the Porte to withdraw his consent given to France. Russia put forward another proposal for Porte's acceptance by which Russia would be given the right to protect all the orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire. The Sultan was in dilemma. He tried to please both, Russia and France. But Russia was not ready to accept his substantial concession offered to the French. The Russian Czar sent Prince Menshikov on a mission to Istanbul to get a treaty signed by which the Turkish Emperor would concede the right of the Czar to protect all orthodox Christian subjects in his empire. The demand of Russia appeared to Britain as extravagant and her ambassador to Turkey, Straford de Radcliffe, advised the Porte to accept the demand of the protection of holy places but reject the demand of protection of orthodox subjects in his empire. Prince Menshikov's mission did not succeed and he returned home. On July 2, 1853, the Russian army crossed river Pruth and occupied the Turkish principalities. Russia declared that her action was not an act of war but as a guarantee for seeking subsequent acceptance of her just demands by the Porte.

While the situation got worse, the Sultan received some encouraging response. France and Britain ordered their fleets to rush to the Dardanelles. To gain certain advantages over these powerful adversaries, the Czar ordered the Russian fleet to destroy the Turkish squadron on the Black Sea. The Russian fleet accordingly brought about the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope—often called 'the Sinope massacre'.

The Sinope massacre turned a small naval battle into an all out war after Russia's refusal to withdraw her forces from the Turkish principalities and the Black Sea. The allies won a victory at Alma, north of Sebastopol, where 40,000 Russian soldiers led by Prince Menshikov offered stiff resistance. Had the Allies, despite heavy losses, carried on their attack of Sebastopol vigorously, it would have fallen. However, the French commander had his say, thereby giving much valuable time to the Russians to regain their strength. The long siege of Sebastopol

continued without avail. The Allies won two small battles at Balaclava and Inkerman. But the key to success lay in the capture of Sebastopol. The victory was nowhere in sight since the Russians entrenched themselves in an impregnable position. The Allied armies, which included an army of Piedmont, made vain efforts to capture the stronghold. The allied commanders did not coordinate their work and committed many blunders. So did the Russians. In the end the Allied armies captured Sebastopol in September 1855 and it was followed by the fall of Kars. The Russians agreed for peace on the basis of four points. In the meantime Czar Nicholas I died leaving his liberal son Alexander II to bring about the conclusion of the war. The Treaty of Paris was signed on March 30, 1856, by all the concerned parties.

The terms of the Treaty of Paris (1856) were as follows:

- (a) All the powers, signatories to the treaty, agreed to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish empire under the Sultan.
- (b) The Sultan agreed to improve the conditions of his subjects, particularly the Christian subjects living in his empire. The powers agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Turkish empire.
- (c) Russia got back Crimea but the Black Sea was neutralised. Turkey received the Kars.
- (d) The navigation in the Danube was kept open to all ships of other nations. The principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia were to remain under the control of the Turkish emperor. Bessarabia was merged with Moldavia so that it would act as a buffer state between Russia and Turkey.

In a separate treaty (April 15, 1856) Britain, Austria and France undertook to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire individually and collectively. This was followed by 'the Declaration of Paris' which prescribed a code of conduct for all the belligerents in case of a naval war.

## Results

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Whatever may be the terms of the Treaty of Paris, they proved to be

transient in character. Russia was deeply disappointed after signing the treaty, and therefore had no intention of respecting its terms. The Russian emperor waited for an opportunity to repudiate the terms of this treaty. He got this much awaited opportunity on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war (1870). Bismarck permitted Russia (in exchange for her help) to repudiate the terms of the Treaty of Paris. For example, Russia no longer recognised those terms which referred to the neutralisation of the Black Sea. She asserted her right to send warships to that region. The signatories of the Treaty of London in 1871 allowed Russia's claim and therefore Britain's victory at the Crimean war proved to be transient.

Not lagging behind in many respects, the Sultan hardly cared for the well-being of his Christian subjects. He had no intention of implementing his promise given to the treaty powers. Atrocities came to be perpetrated by his officials on the Christian subjects. Thus the Treaty of Paris was no longer held valid as none of the powers were prepared to respect its terms. The powers which gained anything at all from this war were Sardinia and France. Cavour represented Sardinia in the Paris meeting held at the conclusion of the Crimean war. He was able to make Piedmont take its legitimate place in the Council of Nations. It was in this conference of Paris, that Cavour sought help from big powers to bring about the unification of Italy.

The French emperor, Napoleon III, was highly pleased with the outcome of the war. He had taught a lesson to the Russian Czar not to be insolent. The French were pleased with their emperor's victory.

The Czar of Russia felt humiliated. The war cost him dearly in terms of men and money. His reputation suffered. At home he was forced to yield to the demands of reforms put forward by his subjects.

The results of the war were not tangible. The settlements made remained temporary since all the powers concerned only paid lip sympathy to the terms of the treaty. Nevertheless, apart from war and peace, people all over the world warmly appreciated the glorious services rendered by Florence Nightingale to the wounded and dying soldiers in the hospital at Scutari. The Crimean war had taught a lesson to the statesmen of the time, that war "is a risky instrument of foreign policy".

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3. Taylor, A.J.P., *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe (1848-1918)*.
4. Medlicott, W.N., *The Congress of Berlin and After*.
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# 13

## Russia During the 19Th Century

*A*t the threshold of the nineteenth century, Russia, despite the reforms introduced by Peter the Great and Catherine, remained a poor and backward country. She occupied a major part of Eurasian continents with two million square miles of area and a population of 45 million. The Russian population was composed of many nationalities and races. Most of them belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church and the rest were either Mohammedans or Jews. A majority of Russians belonged to the Slav race. The principal language was Russian, but other languages were also spoken. German was spoken in the Baltic provinces, and in the adjacent territories lived Finns and Lithuanians. But the Czar of Russia ruled over all from his capital, Moscow.

The Russian society was feudal in character. The Czar, the nobles and the clergy constituted the privileged section of Russian society. There were about 40,000 families of nobles. The nobles occupied important positions in the civil service and in the army. They owned large estates but were exempt from paying many taxes to the State. The clergy also belonged to the privileged section and it wielded great influence upon the Czar and the nobles. The most crushing burden of paying the taxes to the State fell upon the poor peasants. There were peasants called serfs who did not enjoy any freedom at all. They were bonded labourers meant to serve their landlords throughout their lives. Except the serfs working on the royal domain, the serfs in various parts of Russia suffered untold miseries. There was no middle class as such in Russia except during the last years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

## Czar Alexander I (1801-25)

Needless to mention that the Russian Czar during the nineteenth century was an all powerful potentate. The entire political system devolved on his character. Czar Alexander I ascended the throne in 1801. He was a bundle of contradictions. He was both thunderous and enigmatic. Among the emperors and ministers who attended the Congress of Vienna in 1804-15, the presence of the Russian Czar was conspicuous for the reason that he was the only liberal who extended benign influence on the proceedings of the Congress. It was he who insisted on offering generous terms to the defeated French. He also insisted on the new French king to rule the country according to a charter. He encouraged the aspirations of the German people for unity and integrity of their country. He was exceptionally liberal with the Poles so much so that he formed a separate kingdom of Poland and granted it autonomy under his rule. He appealed to all the Christian rulers that henceforth they should treat their subjects like their own children. He asked them to be true to their subjects like their own children. He asked them to be true Christians in their dealings with neighbouring rulers. He proposed the Holy Alliance based on the principles of Christianity which was signed by almost all the countries except the Pope and Britain. It looked as though "for the first time in history Russia was assuming the leadership of Europe". Unfortunately, he proved to be a man of unstable mind and character. Prince Metternich was frightened of his liberal traits and urged him to follow a policy of caution. Playing upon his weak mind, Metternich succeeded in converting the liberal minded Czar into bigoted reactionary within three years. The Russian Czar became an ardent supporter of Metternich's reactionary policies. This conversion became clearly visible when the Czar throttled the autonomy of the new kingdom of Poland. He became a great reactionary during the last years of his life.

## Czar Nicholas I (1825-55)

Alexander I appointed Nicholas as his successor to the throne in preference to his elder brother Constantine. The regime of Nicholas I witnessed royal tyranny of the worst kind. The supporters of Constantine

staged a revolt during the month of December 1825 called "the Decemberist conspiracy", by which they wanted to dethrone Nicholas. Nicholas suppressed the revolt with an iron hand. During the subsequent years he passed laws by which he curbed the civil liberties, freedom of press, and religious freedom. He let loose an engine of oppression. No wonder thousands of those who opposed his horrendous regime were either arrested and sent to Siberia in exile or slaughtered. The new Czar extended unlimited support to the reactionary rulers of Europe. The Russian police exercised arbitrary powers and made the life of the people miserable by persecuting the innocent. But his administration introduced financial reforms and codified Russian laws.

The character of the Czar was reflected even in his foreign policy. He gave support to Metternich for carrying out reactionary policies on the one hand, and on the other suppressed the Polish revolt with ruthless ferocity. The constitution granted to the Poles earlier by his late brother was abolished and the country was annexed to Russia. He also lent the support of his army to the Austrian government to suppress the Hungarian revolt. Thousands of Hungarians including their leader, Kossuth, fled the country. Thus Hungary lost its freedom and became a part of the Austrian empire. Czar Nicholas I proposed to Britain to bring about the swift dismemberment of the "sickman of Europe" with a view to share the spoils. Had it been accepted, probably, Europe would have been saved of yet another war—the Crimean war. The Russian Czar offered to Britain, some territories in the Balkans but retaining a major part of it for himself. During the last years of his rule the Crimean war broke out and it started the decline of Czardom.

## Czar Alexander II (1855-1881)

On the death of Nicholas I, the Russian throne was occupied by his son Alexander II. He was 37 years of age when he ascended the throne and did not inherit the cruel traits of his father. He was most humiliated at the defeat of his country at the hands of Britain and France in the Crimean war. He was convinced that the Russian military system had become hopelessly inefficient. Czar Alexander II felt the pulse of the nation at this critical juncture in the history of Russia and inaugurated a

series of reforms which even his uncle (Alexander I) had not contemplated during his life time.

## Reforms

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All repressive laws relating to the freedom of travel, press and religion were revoked. The universities in Russia and Poland gained their autonomies. By far the greatest act of the Czar, which had far-reaching socio-economic consequences for the country, was that of the abolition of serfdom. Russia had 45 million serfs, half of them working on the crown lands and the remaining under the nobles and the church. The condition of the serfs were no better than the slaves of America. They worked on lands of their masters and received meagre wages. They were much exploited. No improvements on land were effected either by the landlord or the church or the emperor, but the crushing burden of paying taxes fell upon the shoulders of the peasants. Comparatively, the serfs working on the crown's land were better off since the lands were held by *Mirs* (village communities). There was no hope until Czar Peter III released the nobles from the obligation of the military service. Millions of serfs anxiously awaited their emancipation by another *Ukase* (imperial order) which was never issued. His successor, Catherine II, gave more powers to the landed nobles to continue their tyranny over the pitiable serfs. Her successor, Paul, did nothing and the next Czar Alexander I did not go beyond issuing an *Ukase* permitting the landlords "to liberate their serfs, they pleased." The people who derived some benefit out of it if were the peasants of the Baltic provinces, but by and large the status of serfs in Russia still remained unchanged. During the last days of Alexander I he envisaged a scheme to emancipate the serfs gradually. After his death his brother Nicholas did not do anything on this issue.

The disaster at Crimea (1856) changed the whole scene and it exposed not only the military ineptitude but also revealed the socio-economic backwardness of the country. The final responsibility for this state of affairs rested squarely on the shoulders of the despotic Czar. "An autocracy is safe only so long as it can command success; a military empire cannot withstand the shock of defeat". Therefore, the new Czar, who succeeded during the middle of the crimean war, felt it necessary to

introduce liberal reforms in his country. As mentioned earlier, he inaugurated a series of reforms during the first decade of his tenure. But he was careful enough to safeguard royal prerogatives and let the people know that reforms can come from above and not by violent revolution.

## The Edict of Emancipation (February 1861)

The most historic edict that he promulgated in 1861 was the liberation of serfs from their bondage. The edict provided for the economic rehabilitation of the serfs and also compensation for the masters. The serfs got lands from their respective masters for their subsistence, but the actual ownership of the lands lay with the *Mir* to which they were attached. Annual payments to the Mirs by the serfs began to take place. The Mir was held responsible for collecting yearly payments from the newly liberated serfs which went towards compensating the concerned landlords for the loss of their lands. It must be remembered that after making annual payments for 49 years, the serfs became the virtual owners of the lands they tilled. While the Irish holdings were large, the Russian peasants got about two and a half acres on private estates, and from 12 acres to 25 acres in the case of crown lands.

The royal edict emancipating the serfs from their bondage had far-reaching consequence on the Russian society. It may be said that while in Great Russia, the liberated serfs went on paying 49 yearly instalments towards meeting the loss suffered by their former landlords, in the South and the West the "emancipation was real and complete".

The Zemstvo law of 1864 provided for the reorganisation of local governments in European-Russia. This subcontinent was divided into 360 districts and each possessed an elected council with an executive board to administer primary education, poor relief, hospital care, maintenance of records, and so on. These councils enjoyed the power to impose local rates on citizens. Provincial councils also functioned effectively. For the first time Czarist administration felt the pressure of public opinion.

Following the abolition of serfdom and the reorganisation of the local councils, the Czar introduced some reforms in the judicial system based on Western principles. The judicial administration was separated from

the civilian administration and the independence of judges was respected.

A new penal code came into vogue which simplified the procedures of the dispensation of justice. Justices of Peace were elected by the people and important suits came before the tribunal of trained judges appointed by the Czar. The press censorship was relaxed in 1864 and the secondary system of education was introduced during the same year.

It looked as though Czar Alexander II was determined to take Russia along the progressive path and raise her status in the eyes of Western nations. Alas, it was not to be. There followed a period of agonising reprisal from 1863 onwards. He became suddenly reactionary following a bloody revolt in Poland.

## **Polish Revolt (1863)**

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The Polish revolt was brutally suppressed and no foreign power came to her rescue. Poland was deprived of her autonomy and she was merged into the Russian empire. There followed the policy of 'Russification' which was directed towards destroying the national identity of the Poles. All opposition to the Czarist regime in Poland was suppressed and laws were passed to gag the press and public opinion. The reactionary policy provoked the Poles which resulted in the birth of various movements, namely Nihilism and Anarchism. Many students of colleges and universities of Russia turned into Nihilists and opposed the Czarist autocracy. Violence and bloodshed became the order of the day. The Nihilists made an attempt to assassinate the Czar in 1866 but he escaped miraculously.

The doctrines of Karl Marx (founder of modern communism) and the teachings of Bakunin influenced the Russian student community. The former founded *The International* which evoked considerable response from the student community. The latter preached "the gospel of Anarchy", that is, the destruction of all institutions before the founding of new ones. The underground terrorist activities carried on by the followers of the above intellectuals annoyed the Czar to such an extent that he let loose oppression. Between 1871 and 1881, the Czar was very much preoccupied with the European affairs. At home, he followed the

policy of repression which, unfortunately, did not meet with positive results. On the other hand, his policy provoked the Nihilists thereby increasing violence everywhere. At last the Czar decided to give up his harsh rule and announce liberal reforms. Before he could do that he was assassinated on March 13, 1881.

## Foreign Policy

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After suffering a humiliating defeat in the Crimean war, there followed another setback in Russian foreign policy at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Bismarck and Western countries prevented Russia from enjoying the fruits of her gain obtained through the Treaty of San Stefano (1877). Russia, in the meanwhile had cast her covetous eyes on the territories owned by China. After hard bargaining, she could secure a part of the Amur River basin and the port of Vladivostok from China by the terms of the Treaty of Aigun (1858). She also made rapid advance towards the borders of Persia and Afghanistan with the result that the British statesmen were frightened. In the Congress of Berlin, Russia was cheated and it led to the isolation of Russia from European affairs. Russia left the three emperor's league since her ambition in the Balkans clashed with that of Austria. The dual alliance between Germany and Austria caused misunderstanding between Russia and Austria and, Russia and Germany. The situation became tense when Russia attempted a coup at Sofia (Bulgaria) in August 1886. Although the coup was successful and a new government was installed by Russia, the new Prime Minister continued to defy Russia.

## Czar Alexander III (1881-94)

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On the death of Alexander II, Alexander III succeeded to the throne in 1881. He was a hefty Russian peasant. He abandoned the idea of introducing his father's well-intentioned reforms contemplated at the time of his accession. He set in motion the tyranny of the worst kind not only for taking revenge for his father's assassination but also for keeping the political parties opposed to his government under check. In these attempts he was assisted by two reactionary officials, namely, Polydonosteff and Plehve. The former was a court tutor who was

promoted to the post of civil head of the orthodox church and the latter the state police. These two energetic men helped the Czar to apprehend all rebellious elements in the empire and punish them severely. The motto of these two was to establish the creed of "one Czar, one church, one Russia". Thousands of rebels were either executed or banished to Siberia, and the others were tortured. The policy of Russification was continued with all vigour in respect of many subject nationalities who lived in the Russian empire. All foreign systems such as the postal, monetary, fiscal and so on were to conform themselves to the Russian model. The German Lutherans in the south were persecuted. The worst to suffer were the Jews, many of whom emigrated to the United States of America. All hopes of further reforms evaporated and the liberals in Russia were deeply disappointed. In its foreign policy Russia made rapid advance towards the Afghan city, Herat, and the English were afraid of growing Russian expansionism. The intellectuals in the country were also disappointed because there were no reforms, and as such they joined secret organisations.

Although the reign of Czar Alexander III was one of great reaction, it was not without certain advantages. For example, the industrial revolution began during his time. The trans-Siberian railways was constructed which connected the European part of Russia with the Asian part. The project was successfully completed due to a very efficient minister, Count Witte. He received financial assistance from the French Republic for completing the project.

## Czar Nicholas II (1894-1917)

"Czar Nicholas II was a weak man, inclined to fatalism and mysticism but with a streak of obstinacy characteristic of a weak man". He was the last member of the Romanov dynasty and with his abdication and subsequent execution the new Russia emerged as Republic. During his reign two great revolutions (1905 and 1917) took place. Like many of his predecessors, Czar Nicholas II was a reactionary. He opposed liberalism like his father and retained Czarist autocracy. His domestic and foreign policies brought about a series of crises for the country, and the revolution became inevitable in 1917.

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3. Kroff, S.A., *Autocracy and Revolution in Russia*.
4. Sir B. Pares, *Russian Revolution*.
5. Chamberlain, W.H., *Soviet Russia*.
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8. Beloff Max, *Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*.

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## Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Modern Capitalism

A new era in the history of mankind began when the newly invented machines began to produce consumer goods in abundance in England since the second half of the eighteenth century. This transformation in the method of production, from man-made to machine-made, marked the Industrial Revolution. In the last two centuries the Industrial Revolution had undergone some phases. The earliest phase began in England around the middle of the eighteenth century.

Many factors were responsible for the birth of Industrial Revolution in England. It may be remembered that England was principally an agricultural country. However, she had all the infrastructure necessary to set the country on the road to industrialisation. Some of them included the availability of raw materials, scarcity of labour, a fully developed banking system, the birth of entrepreneurial class, and great inventors. Fortunately the British goods enjoyed good reputation in international markets.

Britain had large amounts of coal and iron deposits. It had a large number of semi-skilled workers who were always eager to take up extra work. Raw materials were available cheaply. Fortunately, the Royal Society of London encouraged scientific discoveries and inventions. With potential markets at its disposal England went ahead with the new methods of production. The early phase of the revolution was silent and marked by gradual change. Initially, it was confined to the textile industry alone.

## Inventions

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In 1733, John Kay invented the "Flying Shuttle" which, when operated by hand, increased the speed of the weaving of cloth. It was followed by another invention in 1767 called "The Spinning Jenny" by James Hargreaves. This machine spun eight threads at one and the same time. Hargreaves kept his invention a secret for sometime as he felt that it would cause retrenchment of workers, if used. Two years later Richard Arkwright invented a spinning frame called "Waterframe" and this machine used water power in place of manpower. As waterframe was too big to be run at home and since it required too much water, a factory had to be built. In 1779 Samuel Crompton invented his "Spinning Mule" which included good combination of both, the "Spinning Jenny" and the "Waterframe". It spun hundreds of threads simultaneously and produced eight fine or coarse threads. In course of time the new inventors were paying attention to the method of weaving which was not keeping pace with the manufacture of threads. Reverend Edmund Cartwright invented the 'powerloom' in 1785 which wove cloth very quickly. This invention was run by a big water-wheel. Subsequently, Eli Whitney invented the 'cotton gin', a machine which was used to separate the seeds from the hand-picked cotton from the fields. Over a span of 50 years the textile manufacturing industry in Britain witnessed a transformation in the method of production from handmade to machine-made and the newly invented machines enabled factory owners to produce textile goods in large quantity. What hundreds of workers did in the course of a day in a textile mill, a machine accomplished it within a few hours. During the first half of the nineteenth century cloth with different colours was made since the new methods of bleaching, dyeing and printing were discovered. An American named Elias Howe invented the "sewing machine" in 1846 to stitch clothes.

## Iron and Steel

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For making sturdy machines iron and steel were required. So the iron and steel industry had to make progress. In the old days iron ore was smelted in brick furnaces in which charcoal was used as fuel. The dross

of the iron thus got separated and iron was produced. But the iron so produced was brittle. It had to be smelted again. Finally, coke was used to produce iron. The blacksmiths hammered it into required shapes. But this process was both laborious and costly. Finally Henry Bessemer discovered a faster and cheaper method of producing steel in 1856. In course of time, iron and steel came to be used in making all machines. Textile and metal industries were started in British towns like Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and London.

It is to be remembered that earlier wood was used as fuel in the place of coal. When coal was required in abundant quantity to be used as fuel, coal-mining industry became necessary. Fortunately, Britain had large coal deposits. When coal was mined and made available in plenty, people used it for domestic purposes. Large industries used them as fuel. Ultimately coal replaced wood as fuel material.

## **Steam Engine**

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The story of the invention of steam engine is interesting. In the eighteenth century British mine-owners were faced with the problem of water seeping into the mines. This water had to be removed if work had to make progress. So they employed labourers at great cost to pump the water out. It was at this time a British engineer named Thomas Newcomen invented the first steam engine which was used to pump the water out of the mines. However, this engine consumed too much fuel. A few years later, a young Scottish inventor named James Watt redesigned the steam engine so as to make it produce more power at the cost of less fuel. His invention was a great success and it was patented in 1769. This steam engine was used in the steel and textile industries. Thus steam power replaced water-power.

## **Factory System**

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In Britain the household industry in towns and villages was replaced by the new factory system. Capitalists bought machines and installed them in large buildings and turned them into mills. Many workers were needed to operate the machines. They were paid meagre wages. Unemployed people in the villages began to drift towards cities in search

of jobs in factories. They started living in huts or one tenement apartments near the factories where they worked. The factory system totally replaced the guild system in course of time. Towns, where big factories were located, became cities and their population increased by leaps and bounds.

## Transport and Communication

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The factories produced far more goods than was necessary for mass consumption. So they had to be transported to other cities and towns for distribution. So came the age of steam engine rail transport. An English engineer George Stephenson built the first public railway line, and with his son Robert Stephenson designed an advanced steam locomotive called *Rocket*. In 1830 it completed 40 miles journey from Manchester to Liverpool within an hour and a half. During the next 40 years Britain built a network of railway lines measuring 13,500 miles.

In the United States of America, Robert Fulton invented a steamboat called *Clermont* in 1807. It covered a distance of nearly 150 miles from New York to Albany on the Hudson River in 32 hours' time. After a few years steamboats carrying cargo shuttled on the rivers and coastline. A transoceanic steamboat 'Sirius' crossed the Atlantic in 18 days in 1838.

In the construction of roads and canals, France led other countries. In the USA, canals were dug to link important rivers and lakes. There river transport assumed great importance in course of time. A British engineer, McAdam, showed how smooth and hard-surfaced roads could be built on which vehicles could move without jerks and jolts. Such roads built according to his method were called *macadamised* roads. It was after the construction of these roads, stagecoaches carrying a few passengers were seen on the roads. They covered a distance of 14 miles within an hour. Automobiles appeared much later.

The means of communication also improved a great deal along with the quicker means of transport. An American named Samuel Morse invented the telegraph and sent a message in 1844. Messages were sent by means of telegraph wires connecting one station to the other. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. This new instrument carried human voice on wire from one end to the other.

Cyrus W. Field laid the trans-Atlantic undersea cable connecting the American continent with Europe in 1866. Guglielmo Marconi invented the Wireless Telegraph in 1896, and he succeeded in sending signals across the Atlantic for the first time in 1901. On the basis of this invention radio-broadcasting and subsequently TV was made possible.

## Spread of Industrial Revolution

On the continent, the process of industrialisation began a little late because the British manufactures were flooding the markets. However, to make up for the loss of time were countries like Belgium, France, Germany and Russia. With abundant resources and technical manpower skills, Belgium introduced railways, produced machine tools and textiles, and spread banking-system. Although the tempo of her industrialisation was fast by the middle of the nineteenth century, it slackened enormously by the end due to paucity of mineral resources.

Industrialisation in France was slow due to paucity of mineral resources and political instability. However, it accelerated after receiving subsidies and protection from the government under Emperor Napoleon III. France witnessed railway construction in 1842 which kept pace until the end of the second French empire (1870). The textile industry grew along with other manufactures, with commerce and banking. Paris attracted a large number of tourists. With booming prosperity, France was able to build the Suez Canal in 1869 under its engineer, De Lesseps. Napoleon III was successful in colonising Indo-China and establishing a protectorate over Cambodia.

Although Germany was endowed with vast mineral resources like coal and iron, she was helpless due to the domination of the Austrian empire. Prussia, one of the 38 German states was able to achieve a semblance of unity among the German states by forming *Zollverein* a Customs Union in 1833. This paved the way for the improvement in transport and communication between the member-states. In 1839, the British rendered financial assistance for the construction of railways, and within a decade big cities like Hamburg and Berlin were connected. Industrial investment played a major role in the manufacturing sector. Bismarck persuaded the German Parliament to provide protection to the

German industries by increasing the tariff. Mineral resources like coal and iron along with the technical skill of the Germans went a long way in making Germany a highly industrialised country by the first decade of the twentieth century. Merchants and industrialists cajoled Bismarck to acquire colonies in Asia and Africa.

Russia was unable to catch up with the West in industrialisation despite vast natural resources and this was because of Czarist autocracy coupled with feudal set-up. The defeat suffered in Crimea and the setback at the Congress of Berlin exposed Russia's weakness. Then the rulers realised the need for industrial growth. The first step towards industrialisation began with the introduction of railways after the Crimean War. The real industrial revolution of Russia began after the appointment of Sergius de Witte in 1892 as minister of finance and commerce. He adopted the much desired policy of protection, encouraged native manufactures, and appealed to foreign investors to invest in Russia. With foreign capital, principally from France, Russia undertook railway construction projects, the most celebrated being the Trans-Siberian Railway connecting Europe and the Pacific coast (1891-1902). By 1909 Russia had a network of 41,000 miles of railways, three-fourths of which was owned by the government. The pig-iron production had increased by leaps and bounds, thanks to government's insistence on heavy industry. The leading banks of Russia had deposits of money belonging to foreign countries. Foreign capitalists invested heavily in Russia's coal, iron, chemical and oil industries. It was unfortunate that Czar Alexander III (1881-94) did not introduce labour legislation to improve working conditions of factory workers. The next Czar Nicholas II (1894-1917) made conditions worse for the workers by ruthlessly crushing their agitations. Russia's secret police kept watch over the trade union members.

India too made some progress since the advent of Lord Dalhousie. The British started the construction of railways and telegraphs. The earliest industry which made some progress was the cotton textile industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad. It was not until the 1920s that the British government thought of industrialisation of this country. Jamshedji Tata opened a steel factory to make India self-sufficient in iron and steel in 1907. A few other industries like jute, paper and glass

appeared gradually. But colonial economy with its worst features impoverished this country despite some industrialisation. India subserved the interests of the capitalists in England.

Among Asian countries, Japan made marvellous progress in the field of industrialisation during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. With Commodore Perry's visit and through the subsequent treaties that Japan was forced to sign with western countries it made her realise that the real strength of the country lay in rapid industrialisation. The key to the West's superiority and dominance lay in their industrial, technological, and scientific progress. So Japan chose to industrialise herself with the assistance of Western countries. Today it has surpassed the Western countries in her march towards rapid industrialisation. Shipbuilding, electronics, automobile and textile industries are much advanced in that country.

## **Effects of Industrial Revolution**

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Generally, the Industrial Revolution produced good as well as bad effects. Consumer goods were available in plenty and at reasonable rates. Factories provided employment to many. The general standard of living of people improved. However, these good effects faded when some ugly aspects were manifested. The capitalists and entrepreneurs invested their capital, purchased raw materials and machines, and ran the factories. They paid meagre wages to the workers and earned huge profits. They enjoyed all the luxuries of life and neglected their employees. Men, women and children worked in factories for long hours. Work in mines was difficult. They could not complain of their difficulties for fear of retrenchment. They lived in squalor. Charles Dickens has given a picturesque description of the pitiable conditions of people affected by the Industrial Revolution. In villages, cottage industries suffered due to competition from machine-made goods. Many people became unemployed and they had to go to cities in search of jobs, travelling miles (see social consequences).

## **Capitalist Class**

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The middle class (often described as bourgeoisie class) became wealthy

due to capital investment in trade and industries. The governments of the day were easily influenced by them since they constituted the majority of the voting public. They enjoyed levers of power. All legislations safeguarded their vested interests. The labourers were not permitted to form trade unions. It was in these circumstances that socialism was born in Europe. Socialism advocated the bridging of the gulf between the rich and the poor by means of nationalisation of factors of production. However, it was not until Karl Marx, the German philosopher, that doctrines of scientific socialism were enunciated and a programme of militant action by workers was undertaken to overthrow the bourgeoisie governments.

## **Social Consequences of Industrial Revolution**

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The Industrial Revolution in Britain and subsequently elsewhere in Europe during the early nineteenth century had a great impact on society over a span of nearly seventy years (1830-1900). The traditionally agricultural countries like Britain got transformed into a predominantly industrial nation during this period. England became the workshop of the world. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution this nation witnessed a great increase in population, new inventions, swift means of transport and communication, factories with labour-saving machines belching out smoke and overcrowded towns and cities. To some extent there was decline in agriculture. There was a flow of population from villages to industrial towns.

## Population Growth

One of the conspicuous results of the Industrial Revolution was the growth of population in England. In 1760 it was six and three quarter million, and in 1800 nine million. In 1830 it became 14 million, in 1870 22 million, and in 1900 36 million. Similarly, the population of Europe increased from 187 million in 1800 to 305 million in 1870, and increased further to 440 million in 1910. Obviously, there was the decline of mortality rate the discovery of life-saving drugs and practice of modern medicine and surgery.

## Migration and Urbanisation

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The population grew so enormously that even the expansion of agriculture was unable to absorb. So rural unemployment led to the migration of a number of families to industrial towns and cities. In England, for example, 32 per cent of the workers were employed in agriculture in 1801, and after 100 years it was reduced to 6 per cent. Economic circumstances compelled the rural population to drift towards industrial towns and cities in search of jobs in factories. With the constant flow of population from the rural parts, old cities like Glasgow and Bristol grew enormous in size and population. Some new towns like Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds became thickly populated since many industries were located in these areas. Similarly, European cities such as Paris, Brussels, Milan, Tille and Berlin grew beyond recognition. In 1800 there were only 14 European towns with a population of more than 100,000, but at the end of the century their number rose to more than hundred. Middlesborough was a tiny village with 25 inhabitants in 1801 but by 1901 it had a population of more than 90,000 after the opening of iron and steel industries. By the end of the eighteenth century the city of London was receiving 8,000 to 12,000 immigrants annually.

## Social Changes

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The Industrial Revolution in England disturbed the structure of English

society. Agriculture and village handicrafts declined. The village artisans lost their jobs. In the place of tenant-farmers the rich landlords became influential. The landless labourers flocked to towns and cities in search of jobs. In urban towns and cities two new classes emerged, namely, the industrial capitalists and the industrial working classes.

## Conditions in the Industrial Towns

During the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in England the lot of the worker was miserable. The employer hardly bothered about his housing and living conditions. The worker was simply a wage-earner and his job was uncertain. Therefore, he left his family in the village to fend for itself. He lived in a tenanted apartment which was anything but clean. The close tenements lacked water and toilet facilities. He could not breathe fresh air due to the cramped "back-to-back" housing. At least in his village he had a home, freedom and some friendly people surrounding him. Here in the city he was friendless and lived in penury. In the factory or a mill or a mine he worked for nearly 12 to 14 hours under dangerous conditions. Accidents were common in factories, mills and mines. If he worked in a mine he hardly saw the sunlight. Many a time his employer would dispense with his service and preferred to employ his wife and children because he could get more work done at less expense. So women and children were mostly employed in textile mills. Children below the age of 12 were found in rags and working in factories in miserable conditions.

Since the workers' families were crowded in lodgings which lacked water and sanitary facilities young children often fell sick and died. Many a worker wanted his wife to work so as to supplement his meagre income. Due to the absence of parents, children became delinquents as their education was neglected. Juvenile delinquency became a common feature of urban societies. Cholera epidemics broke out in 1831-33, 1847-48 and 1865-66.

It was unfortunate that the English Parliament did not pay attention to the miserable conditions of the working classes during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution. This was due to its aristocratic composition. It shamefully neglected the conditions which worsened.

## Conditions in Rural Areas

The pre-Victorian period in England did not witness much industrialisation in agriculture. However, after this period, machines began to replace manual labour on agricultural lands. Seed drills and threshing machines were introduced. Later tractors were used for ploughing. Gradually machines on farms did all the chores of farmers on the land. It aroused resentment among the farmers and led to disturbances of 1830-32. Even though there was expansion in agriculture, it was unable to absorb the growing population. So economic conditions worsened leading to migration of rural families to industrial towns. Rural unemployment became a common feature and it led to lowering of farm-wages to subsistence level. The spread of the Industrial Revolution to the countryside marred its beauty and a few English poets lamented over it.

## Democracy and Liberalism

Democracy flourished in Athens (Ancient Greece) and Rome, and institutions built in its name did not survive long. While the British feudal aristocracy remained strong in the Parliament, the French Parliament was not summoned by the king until 1789. Modern democracy, as seen today is traced to the American War of Independence (1776-83). The American war impacted on the French, and there was the French Revolution. The French Revolution of 1789 had its impact on Britain, but democracy as we understand and define today came in the form of reforms rather than revolution. British democracy thus came in a piecemeal manner. While revolutionaries like Jefferson, Washington, Tom Paine and so on were revolutionaries who brought revolutions, Britain's democracy was achieved through reformers like Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith. While the former denounced the restrictions placed on the individual freedom, the latter attacked the restraints placed on economic freedom. Their books, *Fragment on Government* and *Wealth of Nations* respectively drew attention of the reformers in Britain. John Stuart Mill (1806-73) was a leader of philosophical radicals who championed liberal causes, and they are reflected in his famous work, *On Liberty*. The common people of Britain were to agitate for democracy, liberty and liberalism during the nineteenth century.

One such agitation carried by an unarmed crowd led to a massacre at Peterloo in 1819. Since public meetings were prohibited, the police opened fire. Coming under public pressure, the Tory government had to yield and introduce a few measures to reduce appalling conditions prevailing in the country. In 1820, tariff duties were reduced and restrictions on carrying on trade removed. Sir Robert Peel toned down the harsh penal laws of the country and reduced the number of offences carrying death penalty from nearly 200 to 100. Laws banning the formation of workers' union were withdrawn. Likewise, the Test and Corporation Acts which made Protestants to suffer some disabilities were withdrawn. The Catholic Emancipation Act (1829) removed restrictions placed on the Catholics in the country. Both Protestants and Catholics could avail of educational opportunities at Oxford and

Cambridge and also hold public offices.

In 1830 the Whigs advocated parliamentary reforms and introduced the reform bill of 1831 in the House of Commons under the leadership of Lord John Russel. This bill took nearly 15 months, amidst bitter debates and continuing violence, for the final passage. It enfranchised the upper middle class thereby making the House of Commons a partly representative body of the nation. However, it excluded the lower middle class and labourers from enfranchising. Therefore the struggle had to continue with greater intensity. The reformed Parliament under the Whig leaders, namely, Wilberforce and Macaulay, persuaded the Parliament to pass the bill for abolition of slavery, despite the opposition from slave-owners. The Parliament offered to compensate them and the bill was passed in 1833. Nearly 7,50,000 slaves became free. The First Factory Act was passed in the same year which prohibited employers in factories from employing children below the age of nine.

## The Chartist Agitation

The Reform Bill of 1832 did not consider granting suffrage to the working class, even though the latter was responsible for getting the bill passed. Hence started a long and sometimes violent agitation to get this grievance redressed. William Lovett, a leader of the working class, authored a pamphlet entitled the *Rotten House of Commons* which highlighted the inadequacies and inequalities of the Reform Bill of 1832. He demanded universal franchise for all adult males. In 1838, the radicals drafted what is known as "The People's Charter" to be presented to the Parliament which contained demand for six reforms: (1) Universal manhood suffrage, (2) vote by ballot, (3) annual Parliaments, (4) removal of property qualification for membership of Parliament, (5) equal electoral constituencies and (6) payment for elected members. The main purpose of the Chartists who presented the charter as a petition to the Parliament was to make it a true representative of the people, and "not of a class". As the Chartists had no influence, the petition was rejected. The Chartists carried on their agitations through the media, "monster meetings", popular songs, and signature-campaign (the 1839 petition contained signatures of "1,286,000 persons"). The Parliament scoffed at these petitions and rejected them. Petitions presented by the Chartists to the Parliament in 1842 and 1848 met the same fate. The Chartist movement petered out eventually due to many reasons.

The significance of the Chartist movement (1838-48) should not be lost sight of. What the Chartists yearned for was a truly representative government reflecting the wishes of common people, and by sending popular representatives, they could secure the control of the legislature. Such a legislature would bring in favourable conditions through reforms. It was unfortunate that their desire or ideals were considered a 'joke' or impracticable at the time of the submission of petitions. But by the turn of the century, almost all their demands were met (except annual Parliament), thanks to the advent of Victorian era.

During this era England built the largest empire, established a truly representative government with Parliament as the supreme body, introduced a number of reforms reflecting the wishes of the common

people so as to make it a welfare state, and developed the party-system. Liberalism became a slogan or a watchword, and each elected government moved forward to achieve its objective.

## Factory Acts

The march towards improving the conditions of child labour was taken by Sir Robert Peel who got the 'Health and Morals of Apprentices Act' passed in 1902 whose main feature was limiting child's working hours to twelve a day. The second Factory Act was passed at the instance of Robert Peel and Robert Owen in 1819 which prohibited children under the age of nine to work in Cotton Mills, and stipulated that children between age 9 and 13 to work not more than 12 hours a day. The main feature of the 1833 Act laid down the inspection of factories by government inspectors to ensure the compliance of the laws or rules. The Act extended the prohibition of employing children under the age of nine to all the textile factories. The Factory Act of 1844 prohibited night-working hours for women and fixed 12 hours during day time. The Act provided for compensation to injuries received while working with unguarded machines. As the conditions of miners were miserable, the Parliament passed the 'Coal Mines Regulation Act' in 1842. Women, girls and boys (less than ten years of age) were not to be employed in mines. The Factory Act of 1847 fixed ten hours a day for women and 'young persons'. The Factory Acts Extension Act was passed to define what a factory is, and organisations conforming to this to come under factory laws. The 1878 Act prescribed a Factory Code. The employers had to abide by the rules laid down in code. Parliamentary Acts pertaining to Workers' compensation, old-age pension, and national unemployment and sickness insurance were all passed after the Victorian era, i.e., 1906, 1908 and 1911 respectively.

The other reforms included the Elementary Education Act of 1870 which enabled all children to have their schooling in public-funded schools. The most important reforms cherishing the ideals of the Chartists were the Reform bills of 1867, 1884 and 1918 which extended the franchise to make English institutions highly democratic. In 1911, the members of the House of Commons were paid £400 annually. The Labour Party was founded in 1906. The Repeal of Corn Laws in 1846 under the stewardship of Sir Robert Peel paved the way for economic liberalism, because the next two decades witnessed many protective

duties in the British tariff being removed. The significance of all the labour legislations and other reforms as mentioned above made the British democracy stable and progressive. They provided an example for other countries to follow. Womanhood suffrage came in 1918.

## The Rise of Socialism

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The French Revolution of 1789 ushered in new ideas relating to the reorganisation of the society on the basis of economic and social equality. Monarchy was replaced by the rule of the middle class (bourgeoisie) which looked after its own interests rather than the poor class—a majority of them being workers. Babeuf is regarded as the father of socialism as he was the first to advocate abolition of the right to property, and plead for social equality and state ownership of wealth. He was found guilty of causing public unrest and was executed in 1797.

The plight of workers caused by the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution attracted the attention of thinkers and philosophers who advocated a new scheme to bring about a just society—the foremost among them being Robert Owen (1771-1858), Henri de Saint Simon (1760-1815), and Charles Fourier (1772-1837). These men were dubbed as utopian socialists by Karl Marx. Owen is described as the father of British socialism because he set up an ideal community of workingmen and their families at New Lanark (England). He supported labour reforms and his *Pamphlets* attracted the attention of many. Fourier, a Frenchman conceived a society divided into industrial communities, each of 1800 persons, and each person getting a fixed sum. Saint Simon, a Frenchman, participated in the American Revolution under the command of General Washington. After returning to France, he propagated the idea of the state owning the means of production, and the industry being organised on the basic tenet of “Labour according to capacity and reward according to services”. The idea of Saint Simon was adopted by Louis Blanc, who actively participated in the overthrow of Louis Philippe’s monarchy in 1848, and the establishment of a republic. Louis Blanc bemoaned the plight of the labourers under the bourgeoisie government. He advocated the *right* of every man to employment and it was the *duty* of the state to provide it. When he became the minister he opened national workshops

for creating jobs. When the whole experiment failed under the provisional government, Paris witnessed one of the worst tragedies, thousands killed and thousands deported. Marx was to draw lessons concerning the failure of this socialist experiment (detailed account given in a separate chapter).

## **Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

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Karl Marx may be regarded as the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century. He founded scientific socialism which was most admired as well as criticised. Born to Jewish parents in Trier (Prussia) he was educated at Bonn, Berlin and Jena (the last named gave him the doctorate degree in philosophy). He was very much influenced by another German philosopher Hegel. He started editing a paper which was suppressed by the government. He emigrated to Paris where he met Friedrich Engels. Thereafter they developed life-long friendship. Marx was expelled from Paris, and he settled in Brussels where he joined the League of the Just. Before the outbreak of the French Revolution of 1848, Marx and Engels issued the famous pamphlet titled *Communist Manifesto* which called upon all the workers of the world to break the shackles of slavery from the bourgeoisie governments. Driven from Brussels he went to London where he devoted most of his time in the British Museum reading and writing. Out of his research came the *Das Capital*. It may be regarded the best work produced in that century which fired the imagination of many thinkers, scholars and students.

Marx's political and social philosophy rests on three basic principles, namely, historical materialism (i.e. economic conditions determines the course of history), class struggle, and theory of surplus value. Taking the first principle, the system of production and exchange of goods "at given time in any society determined the structure of that society, its form of government, its laws, its institutions generally, and its culture, including even religion." When this system changes, society also undergoes transformation, *i.e.* slavery to feudal and feudal to bourgeoisie.

As for the second principle, Marx mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto* that the "history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". This is a fight between the haves and have-nots. This

fight will cease only by a revolution and not by gradual change. In the third principle Marx talks about the worker not being paid “the full value of his labour.” The capitalist pays him just enough which is not the full value of his labour or services rendered. The difference, called the surplus, is retained by the capitalist himself. This is gross injustice meted out to wage-earner. In a capitalist society the rich become richer and the poor poorer. While pointing out the inadequacies of capitalism, he said that it “produces, above all, its own grave-diggers”. In the end, the proletariat (working class) should establish dictatorship in order to destroy capitalism. True to his writings and theories, Marx organised the first international (of socialism) in London in 1864.

Lenin and Stalin, both followers of Marx, founded the communist state of Russia after 1917 Revolution. Lenin, who organised the revolution, believed that the demise of capitalism would take longer time, longer than Marx expected. He said that in the intervening period capitalist-imperialisms would play its role. He regarded the World War I as a war between the imperialist powers themselves, and foresaw the end of capitalism. While Lenin succeeded in overthrowing czarist autocracy by a bloody revolution, it was Stalin who later tried to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat—with himself personifying it.

## Fabian Socialism

As against the Marxian Revolutionary Socialism which talked about the class war, a number of intellectuals, mostly teachers, journalists, social workers, artists and literary men, worked together to set up a society advocating evolutionary socialism. The Fabian Society, named after the Roman General Quintus Fabius, was founded in 1884 in England. The followers of the Fabian Society adopted the tactics of the famed Roman General, namely, 'conquer by delay' (or strike the iron while it is hot), in achieving their objective—the reorganisation of society based on community ownership of land and capital which would work for Common benefit. In other words, this society aimed at emancipating the land and capital from individual and class ownership, and transfer the same to the community. Noted intellectuals and writers contributed to the thinking of evolutionary socialism and hoped to avoid needless violence and bloodshed as preached by the Marxists. Fabian Socialism spread its creed or philosophy through publication of pamphlets. Bernard Shaw, Ramsay MacDonald, Harold Laski, G.D.H. Cole and H.G. Wells were some of those intellectuals and writers who propagated the faith of evolutionary socialism under the aegis of Fabian Society.

Democracy and socialism went hand in hand, and political parties were founded. For instance the German Social Democratic Party was founded in 1875. The Social Democrats differed from the communists. In the 1920s the National Socialist Party (Nazi Party) was founded and Adolf Hitler became its leader. Different schools of thought emerged from the mainstream of socialism, such as syndicalism, guild socialism, collectivism, and ultimately communism. The mushrooming of different schools of socialism made Prof. C.E.M. Joad to say that socialism is like a hat which lost its shape for too many wearing it.

## Rise of Modern Capitalism

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By far the greatest outcome of the Industrial Revolution was the rise of modern capitalism. Capitalism had existed even before the Industrial Revolution but it did not bring about far-reaching changes. By modern capitalism is meant industrial capitalism, an offshoot of Industrial

Revolution. It is an economic system "in which all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, railroads, etc., are privately owned and operated for profit..." The profits derived out of early capitalism were spent on building of churches, donations and charities. But profits derived out of industrial capitalism were reinvested to bring about manifold profits. Wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few captains of industry. It gave them unlimited power, prestige and status in society.

One may as well remember that not many had wealth to buy expensive machines which required spacious rooms to install them. The factory system gradually replaced the old 'domestic system'. Well-to-do industrialists established partnership and ran factories. They employed workers to operate the machines which produced mass consumer goods. After paying meagre wages to the workers they derived huge profits. In course of time, the evils of capitalism became manifest. Modern capitalism grew out of rents received from vast agricultural and urban lands, interests from money-lending, profits from trade, and huge profits derived from joint stock companies and banking institutions. Profits derived out of the sales of factory manufactures added to the accumulation of capital.

## Growth of Industrial Capitalism

Industrial enterprises expanded to a great extent in UK and the USA during the second half of the nineteenth century. They managed railways, mines, textiles and other mills. Sometimes joint stock companies or corporations undertook great industrial ventures including foreign investments. The stock and shareholders remained idle after investments but the salaried employees did everything for them. The profits went into the hands of stock and shareholders.

Between "the years 1870 and 1910, capital investment increased in Great Britain from 35 to 70 billion. During the same years British foreign investments rose from 5 to 20 billion dollars, French from 2.5 to 8 billion, and German from none to five billion". A growing proportion of this increasing profits in Germany and the United States were enjoyed by great industrial combinations called "Cartels" or "Trusts". They were

formed by industrial magnates to eliminate competition, reduce overhead expenses and establish a practical monopoly. In the USA monopolies were set up in the oil and steel industries. Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller made fortunes by eliminating most of their business rivals. The directors and stockholders of big business companies were called "industrial barons" or "robber barons". Reputed bankers demanded control over corporations in return for granting them loans. Thus Morgan-Rockefeller empires held "in all 341 directorships in 112 corporations".

Industrial capitalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought about many evils. Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few ruthless individuals led to a number of abuses. They influenced state polices to promote their vested interests, exploited the weakness of the workers, dictated prices in the market and did not act in the national interest. Therefore, their power had to be curbed by the state. President Theodore Roosevelt of the USA acted in a free and fearless manner in persecuting the monopolists under anti-trust laws.

## Suggested Readings

1. *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Vol. VI, Part I and II.
2. Unesco's *History of Mankind*, Vol. V, Part I, Ch. 6.
3. Mitchell, James. (Gen. Ed,) *History and Culture*, Vol. II, 1977 (Mitchell-Beazley).
4. Current, William and Frank, Friedel, *American History: A Survey*.
5. Hayes, C.J.H., *Contemporary Europe*.
6. Trevelyan, G.M., *English Social History*.

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## The Third French Republic

*A*fter the signing of the treaty of Frankfurt, the trouble of France did not end as expected. It began when the Paris Commune rose in revolt against the abject surrender of Alsace and a part of Lorraine to the Prussians. Again, the provisional government functioned not from Paris but from Bordeaux. The Bordeaux Assembly directed Thiers to start negotiations with the enemies with a view to end hostilities and sign a peace Treaty. The Paris Commune felt suspicious about the intentions of Thiers. It must be remembered that ever since the revolution of 1789 the Paris Commune had played an important role in the affairs of the government of France. But now she was reduced to a position of non-entity. No importance was given to her opinion. The Paris Commune was of the opinion that the war should go on and the invaders should be thrown out of the country. Two things enraged the Paris Commune. Firstly, it did not like the armistice to be signed with the Prussians, and secondly, it could not tolerate a National Assembly sitting at Bordeaux with a royalist majority. Thirdly, the Paris Commune was aware that the Prussians were bent upon imposing a humiliating peace treaty. The Bordeaux Assembly appointed Thiers, a veteran politician, to bring about an early settlement with the enemies. Thus there was a conflict of interests between the Bordeaux Assembly and the Paris Commune.

### The Revolt of the Paris Commune (Civil War)

The Paris Commune was enraged because the Bordeaux Assembly favoured measures which helped the landlords and the merchants. These measures were passed along with another, namely, the shifting of the venue of the Assembly from Bordeaux to Versailles, a centre of royalism.

Again the Assembly passed measures to discontinue payment to the National Guards and disarm them. All these acts of the Assembly provoked the Paris Commune. The situation became tense in Paris when the National Guards refused to be disarmed. They disobeyed the orders of the central government. Thus a civil war became imminent. Thiers despatched French troops to carry out the orders of the central government, and accordingly, the French troops clashed with the National Guards. In the meantime, the Paris Commune formed its own government with elected representatives. The regular siege of Paris commenced on April 2, 1871. There was a civil war. Street fightings broke out when the regular army entered Paris to capture it. A bloody week followed, after the fall of Paris into the hands of the government troops, and during that period hundreds of buildings were burnt and thousands of soldiers were killed. Paris city lay in ruins. About 20,000 rebels were shot and another 40,000 were arrested. A majority of them were sentenced to death and 7,500 of them were transported to the colonies. Arrests and trials were carried on up to the year 1876. All this happened when the Prussian army was surrounding the city of Paris. Karl Marx derived his lessons from the failure of the Paris Commune. After the civil war ended France signed the peace treaty with the Prussians. It took four years for the dust to settle before the third French Republic could get firmly established. However, adversities continued to confront the Republic for some more years.

## **The Work of Thiers**

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After suppressing the bloody riots in Paris, Thiers concluded the peace treaty with Germany. According to the terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt, France was to pay a war indemnity of \$200,000,000 over a period of three years. Therefore, his government floated loans and the French responded to it well. After settling the war indemnity with Germany, France got rid of the German troops from her soil. For achieving this end Thiers was hailed as the "liberator of French territory". He took the next few steps for strengthening the political and military stability of the country. For example, the French government passed a measure by which compulsory service for the youth was introduced. By far the greatest achievement of

Thiers was in the direction of the preservation and defence of the newly established French Republic and prevent re-imposition of monarchy. Therefore he took steps to avoid this eventuality. He felt extremely proud of it and hoped that his services would be continued for ever. However, he was disappointed when he submitted his resignation and was not asked to continue. The royalists who were in majority in the Assembly, appointed Marshal MacMahon the leader and he strove hard to restore the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Comte de Chambord. But this candidate insisted on certain conditions to be fulfilled before he could accept the crown. Among other things it included the restoration of the white Bourbon flag with fleur-de-lys. Unfortunately, it annoyed all except the royalists. The only alternative candidate was the Orleanist candidate, Comte de Paris, but MacMahon waited patiently for the death of old Comte de Chambord. But before this could happen in France the political situation changed considerably.

The royalist plan to foist a monarchy on France was foiled by its most redoubtable opponent, Gambetta. His whirlwind election campaigning in the early years of 1870 resulted in the return of 26 republican candidates, and in 1875 the royalists were compelled to deviate from establishing monarchy. They agreed to the drafting of a Republican constitution according to which France was to have a parliamentary democracy. The constitution provided for a bicameral legislature, namely, the Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, and an elected president to be chosen by the two Houses. His cabinet was made responsible to the Chamber. His powers, though analogous to that of the British monarch, included the dissolution of the Chamber with the consent of the Senate. President MacMahon exercised this power in 1877. The country returned a larger majority of republicans to his utter surprise. Therefore he resigned, yielding his place to a Republican named Jules Grevy. The seat of the government was immediately shifted from the royalist centre of Versailles to the Republican citadel of Paris.

## The Third French Republic

During the early years of its existence, the third French Republic was plagued by many serious troubles. The Republican Party itself was torn

into two factions—moderates and radical republicans. The former assured the propertied classes with the slogan of “liberalism truly conservative” and advocated colonial expansion of the country, whereas the radicals espoused the cause of Jacobinism and “National Concentration at home”. Both the factions were anti-clerical and campaigned against the Catholic church. The greatest among the moderates was Jules Ferry, a lawyer and a journalist. The most prominent among the radical leaders was Georges Clemenceau.

The political stability of the third French Republic was threatened by many scandals. They tarnished the fair name of the Republic and the people were losing confidence on this account. The son-in-law of the President was found using his position to bestow the Legion of Honour on his favourites. President Grevy did not find anything wrong on this account, but the public opinion forced him to quit.

## **General Boulanger**

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General Boulanger, a handsome ex-military governor of Tunis, attracted the attention of the French public for quite sometime. He was seen riding his horse, making speeches, and appealing to his compatriots to take revenge upon Germany to recover the province of Alsace and Lorraine. He attacked the new constitution, and also the timidity of the French government in dealing with Germany. Being an impressive figure, people began to admire his courage and other qualities. He became extremely popular with the royalists and militarists. During the elections his name was filed for contesting from many constituencies and surprisingly he was elected in almost all of them. His rising popularity caused great anxiety to the republican government. The government did not know his intentions. It acted boldly and ordered his arrest. He was to be brought to trial on charges of treason. Sensing danger, Boulanger fled and his followers too disappeared from the scene suddenly. After sometime, it was known that he committed suicide in Brussels. The Republican government was happy to get rid of him.

## **Panama Scandal**

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In 1892 the Republic government was rocked by another great scandal—

the 'Panama scandal'. It provided a wonderful opportunity to the enemies of the Republic to talk about government corruption. It all began with the commencement of the construction of the Panama Canal by an expert French engineer, De Lesseps. It may be remembered that the French led by this engineer successfully completed the Suez Canal project. The success of this project enhanced not only the prestige of this great engineer but also of the French government. The Suez Canal subsequently became the most important international waterway connecting the Middle-East with South Asia. De Lesseps undertook to construct a similar project on the Isthmus of Panama. However, this highly decorated and honoured engineer made a mess of things by his miscalculations in this project. When the whole project came to a sudden standstill, investigations into the failure of this project exposed fraud, bribery, extravagance and blackmail. Some of the deputies and senators were also involved in this great scandal. De Lesseps was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Thousands of investors lost their money. Despite this great scandal the Republican government survived. But it gave an opportunity to the enemies of the Republic to talk about Republican corruption.

## **Dreyfus Case**

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Even before the Panama scandal died down the Republican government was faced with a more severe crisis in 1894 than the previous one. The Dreyfus case plagued the Republic for the next 12 years. Never in the history of a nation were such deep passions aroused. It almost split the French society into two sections - pro-Dreyfus and anti-Dreyfus. On the basis of a forged, fragmented and unsigned document, Captain Dreyfus of the French army was charged by a military tribunal for leaking out defence secrets to a foreign enemy (Germany). A courtmartial decreed his sentence to life-imprisonment. He was sent to the most dreaded prison in Devil's Island. The vehemence with which he was persecuted revealed that he was being punished for being a Jew. A large number of intellectuals in France including the famous novelist, Emile Zola, believed that Dreyfus was innocent. They were convinced that he was punished because of his birth. On the other side, the clericals,

monarchs and army officers were equally vociferous in pointing out that Dreyfus was guilty beyond any reasonable doubt. The case became the most widely discussed topic in public places and received a good amount of publicity in the newspapers. Heated arguments were heard for and against Dreyfus in public places. It was disturbing the peace within the country. Secrets continued to leak out proving that Dreyfus (who was then in Devil's Island Prison) must be innocent. Col Picquart, head of the Intelligence Department, apprehended another army officer, in spite of the risk involved. When the accused was brought before the courtmartial the judges acquitted him. Picquart was disgraced. His successor, Col Henry, confessed that he forged the documents in order to use them against Dreyfus. Subsequently, he committed suicide. The minister concerned had to resign. Despite these developments, the army authorities did not deem it fit to release Captain Dreyfus. These developments aroused the indignation of the intellectuals of France and they demanded his immediate release. Since things had gone too far, the President of the French Republic himself had personally intervene to bring about the release of Dreyfus by quashing the old verdict. The whole episode did not end here. It continued for some more years because the royalists, the clericals, and the army circles still held Dreyfus responsible for the leakage of the defence secrets. However, in 1906 some more documents were discovered which proved Dreyfus innocent. The Dreyfus case aroused deep passions and divided the country. However, when it ended, the republic emerged stronger than before with the unity of radicals and socialists. The monarchists and the clericals stood isolated.

## Achievements of the Republic

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## Reforms

From 1881 to 1884 laws were passed by which certain political concessions were granted to the people. The freedom of the press was restored. Public meetings could be held. The government recognised the right of the workers to form trade unions. It granted the people the right to free and compulsory education. The government also permitted the exiled Communards to return to the country.

The second phase of reforms began in 1894. The government regulated female and child labour. It provided for cheap and sanitary dwellings to workers. The third phase of reforms was inaugurated by Waldeck-Rousseau ministry which included a socialist, Millerand. He became the minister of commerce and credited with having introduced a number of measures to improve working conditions of labourers. The most prominent law which was passed was the Public Health Act. Between 1906 and 1910 a series of reforms such as Ten Hours Factory Act and Old Age Pensions were introduced. It was Waldeck-Rousseau who decided to curb undesirable activities of the clericals and the militarists who were opposed to the Republican government. It was these sections who had demanded the trial and punishment of Captain Dreyfus. The Waldeck-Rousseau ministry increased its strength by taking one more socialist member named Briand. The Republican government passed laws by which schools run by religious orders were closed. The anti-church policy included laws passed by Jules Ferry (French minister of Public Instruction) to remove Catholic influence from the educational system in France. Compulsory attendance in classes where religious instructions were imparted was forbidden in schools. The Waldeck-Rousseau ministry went a step further and passed the law of association by which religious orders should obtain prior permission of the government to operate in the country. As a result of this anti-church policy, thousands of priests and nuns had to leave the country and the schools had to be closed. In 1904, another law was passed by which religious orders imparting instructions in schools were to stop their activities after ten years. In other words, the government encouraged secular education. Napoleon's Concordat was thus set aside and the

Catholic Church lost its position and prestige during the early years of the twentieth century. The Waldeck-Rousseau ministry gave political stability after introducing several socio-economic-educational reforms.

## **The French Colonial Empire**

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In the meantime, France had extended her overseas empire. Jules Ferry, a pacifist and radical, who guided the destiny of the French Republic during the next few years, advocated a “forward policy” in the expansion of French colonial empire. His stand was criticised by Georges Clemenceau. During the early years of the twentieth century there was a race for colonies among European powers. French interests clashed with Italy over Tunis. The relations between Britain and France came under heavy strain due to the “Fashoda Incident”. This incident was about to result in a war between them. Similarly the relations between France and Germany underwent severe strain over the protectorate of Morocco. Despite these setbacks, France regained her equilibrium on the eve of the First World War.

France established a protectorate over Tunis (North Africa) despite the opposition of Italy. France also conquered Tonkin in Indo-China and established a protectorate over Annam. The French colonised the Congo region and sent an expedition to Madagascar. France also established its protectorate over Morocco despite opposition from Spain and Germany. She also acquired parts of Senegal, Guinea, Dahomey, Ivory Coast and Nigeria, all in Africa.

## French Economy

France made rapid strides in industry. Her economy received a big boost with the progress achieved in the fields of agriculture, transport, communications and extensive colonisation in Africa and Asia. Despite this remarkable progress, extreme socialists were not happy. The socialists wanted that the economic benefits of the country be equally distributed among all the people, particularly the downtrodden. They and the communists were alarmed at the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few rich persons who were patronised by the government.

The French government was alarmed at the decline of the birth rate in the country vis-à-vis Germany. While the French population remained stagnant at 40 million, the population of Germany increased to 65 million. This fact had serious repercussions on the problem of French defence.

## German Threat

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The rise of the German Empire under Bismarck dwarfed the importance of all other countries, including France, in Europe. Bismarck succeeded in isolating France with his political manoeuvres. However, after his exit, it became possible for France to play its own legitimate role in international affairs. Her first step in foreign policy was taken by De Classey (1898-1905), when he advocated reconciliatory policy with England and Italy. Subsequently, Britain, France and Russia came together and formed the Triple Entente.

## Suggested Readings

1. Wright, *History of the Third French Republic*.
2. Braco, *France under the Republic*.
3. Taylor, A. J. P., *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*.
4. Guerard, *French Civilisation in the Nineteenth Century*.

# 16

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## The German Empire Under Bismarck (1871-1890)

The ascendancy of Germany to great heights of power in Europe followed the fall of the Second French empire in 1871. The Honhennollern King of Prussia took the title of Kaiser (Emperor). The empire consisted of 25 states besides Alsace and Lorraine. Each of the 25 states retained its power and control over many local matters. The local governments passed measures in their own legislative bodies for the welfare of the people. But in other important matters it had to obey the imperial government. The new constitution of Germany provided for a bicameral legislature—a Bundesrat (a federal council) and a Reichstag (imperial Parliament). There was a cabinet consisting of ministers who were appointed by the emperor and remained in office at his pleasure. They were responsible to the emperor and not to the Parliament. Bismarck was appointed chancellor (prime minister) of the German empire and he played a very important role in domestic politics and international relations till the year 1890. He devoted his time and energy to the pursuit of “peace, conservation and development” of the German empire. He was not without enemies and they were bent upon destroying him.

### Progress of Germany

With Bismarck at the helm, the German empire achieved remarkable progress in many fields. The progress of consolidation of the German empire began with the introduction of a uniform code of law. Secondly, by an act of 1873 an Imperial Railway Bureau was established which

unified several states with a network of railway systems. The railways did much to coordinate the communication system in the country. The Bank Act of 1875 empowered the Imperial Bank which controlled the financial operations of the Central government.

Some of the legislations which were passed by the Parliament helped the Imperial government to exploit the natural resources such as coal and iron in the Ruhr and Saar basins. Similarly, natural resources in the newly acquired territory from France were also tapped. In a short time, the country made great progress towards industrialisation.

## **Military Strength**

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Germany achieved great military superiority over the rest of the European countries after her three victories. It was no mean achievement and the contributions of Von Roon and Moltke in this respect were considerable. Germany's strength and status astonished many European countries. In 1862 Prussia had introduced compulsory military service for all young boys in the country. In 1871 this was extended to cover the population of the whole empire. The strength of the German army was fixed at 400,000 soldiers. This helped Germany to maintain her military superiority over her neighbour and arch-enemy, France. Bismarck feared a possible collusion between France and other countries. Therefore, he devoted most of his time to prevent this possibility. He realised the necessity of keeping France totally isolated, and towards this end he worked feverishly.

## **Bismarck Diplomacy Isolates France**

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He was aware that till the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, France would never enjoy peace. Raising the "bogey of French war of revenge" he sought the approval of the Reichstag for maintaining German war preparedness. When France paid a war indemnity of \$200,000,000 in two years time and thereafter reorganised her army, Bismarck became nervous. On some pretext or the other he wanted to declare war on France. But Queen Victoria of Britain made efforts to dissuade Germany from this perilous path. Otherwise there would have been another Franco-German war. The war was also averted because England and

Russia adopted a hostile attitude. He adopted a very friendly attitude towards the Habsburg dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary by encouraging her to extend her sphere of influence in the Balkans. He also counted much upon the friendship with Italy, since Germany was in a way responsible for the liberation of Venice and Rome. Again, the papacy posed a threat to the unity of Italy and Germany; and the clericals in France favoured intervention in restoring the Pope's temporal rule over Rome. Bismarck realised the necessity of Britain's friendship and therefore avoided diplomatic confrontation with her. He scrupulously refrained Germany from entering into a competition with Britain for acquiring colonies. Even at the time of the Franco-Prussian war, he respected the neutrality of Belgium, which was very much appreciated by Britain. He was sure that Britain would not get involved in 'entangling alliances', in Europe so long as Germany could avoid such things which were likely to provoke her rivalry with Austria-Hungary in the Balkan region. She was likely to turn towards France for help but Bismarck cleverly checkmated this possibility by organising the Three Emperor's League (1872) in Berlin. German Emperor William I, Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph and Czar Alexander II and their respective ministers met at Berlin in September 1872 not only to reciprocate their feelings but also to cooperate with one another in times of peace and war. They began to chalk out a common programme of action in times of danger. Although Russia was alarmed at the German press campaign against the revival of French power and Bismarck's fulminations, she was pacified with Bismarck's assurance.

Bismarck's position became somewhat difficult when the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 broke out. The triumph of Russia, and the subsequent peace settlement of San Stefano provoked Great Britain and her European allies. Britain did not agree to Russian preponderance in the Black Sea region as per the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, and therefore demanded its substantial revision. She threatened Russia with war if she did not agree to the modification of the treaty. Bismarck agreed to act as an 'honest broker' and convened a Congress of concerned European powers at Berlin in 1878. He supported the European powers in their demand for revision which resulted in the Treaty of Berlin. Certain advantages which Russia would have derived

out of the Treaty of San Stefano were nullified. Russia was disappointed at the betrayal.

## **Triple Alliance (1882)**

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In order to safeguard Germany from a possible attack by either Russia or Russian-backed third power, Bismarck planned to form a defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879. The most important terms included in the treaty—Dual Alliance—was that if Russia or its ally attacked one or both the parties in the Dual Alliance, the other should come to the rescue of the affected party. Italy joined the Dual Alliance and made it into the Triple Alliance. Italy was grateful to Bismarck for his help during the unification movement of Italy. So Italy, which was angry with France because of colonial rivalry with France, joined the Dual Alliance. By joining this she hoped to establish a number of colonies with the support of the two other partners. Although Italy had not liked Austria-Hungary, she overcame this feeling when France provoked her by occupying Tunis—a colony she herself coveted. In 1883 Romania joined the Triple Alliance.

## **Russia Pacified**

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Bismarck tried to avoid the hostility of Russia. Therefore he persuaded Russia and Austria to come to an understanding. According to the understanding, the three powers, namely, Russia, Austria and Germany would not help a fourth power if a war broke out between that power and any one of them. This Dreikaiserbund Treaty was renewed in 1884. Thus Bismarck ensured the avoidance of a collusion between France and Russia in future.

## **Colonial Expansion of Germany**

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A new movement in Germany began which demanded that the German empire should expand overseas. In other words, Germany was to enter into a race for colonies along with other European powers. Bismarck was unable to stem this race. However, since the movement appealed to jingoist sentiments, he was forced to yield to this demand, though

unwillingly. Germany began to acquire colonies in Africa and Asia (1884-85). Subsequently, what Bismarck had anticipated happened. Britain was alarmed at the growth of the overseas German empire. She considered Germany as a serious rival in the capture of overseas markets. Thus, in international diplomacy Bismarck undoubtedly scored many gains for his country. He kept France isolated and created a chain of military alliances for the protection of the German empire.

## **Bismarck's Home Policy**

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Bismarck managed things exceedingly well in international affairs. However, he had to meet formidable challenges at home. These challenges threatened the enlightened monarchy which he had established in the German empire. Therefore, he had to use all his skills to protect German monarchy from turning into a fully ceremonial institution. Fortunately, he received support from two national parties in the Reichstag, namely, the National Liberal Party and the Free Conservative Party.

## **The Kulturkampf**

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In 1870, the Pope having lost his temporal possessions due to the unification of Italy was anxious not to lose his spiritual authority also. Therefore he issued a bull of papal infallibility concerning religion and morality. A few years earlier the Pope had also issued a syllabus wherein modern developments and concepts such as liberalism, socialism, universal suffrage, scientific inventions and discoveries, all stood condemned. In Germany some leading Catholic intellectuals refused to respect the papal infallibility. Therefore the Pope exercised his authority and excommunicated them. Some of them included university professors and scientists. A problem arose regarding the attitude of the state in relation to the papal order of excommunication. Would the state dismiss those who were excommunicated from their posts? Bismarck did not tolerate church interference, and therefore, opposed church claims to infallibility. His attitude towards the Roman Catholic church made him unpopular particularly among the Catholic section of the German society. They formed a political party of their own called the Centre to

oppose Bismarck. They gained considerable strength in the Reichstag and condemned Bismarck's attitude towards the Pope and the Catholic church.

## May Laws

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Bismarck decided to crush these rebellious clericals and got the Parliament to pass May Laws (172-76). These laws empowered him to deal with the clericals. He expelled the Jesuits from the country, broke off diplomatic ties with the Vatican, and took charge of the educational institutions run by the churches. Those who objected to his policy were put behind the bars. A large number of priests, bishops and archbishops were sent to prison for defying the May Laws. The Pope lodged a serious protest against the introduction of May Laws but they were ignored. Bismarck closed 1,300 parishes to curb the growth of the Centre Party. However, he did not succeed. The Centre Party continued to grow in strength. It demanded the repeal of May Laws and enactment of some social reforms. In 1874, it polled one and a half million votes and increased its strength from 60 to 90 members in the Reichstag. Taking the help of the minor groups, Windhorst, the leader of the Centre Party began to undermine the strength of Bismarck in the Reichstag. It was then that Bismarck realised the trap set for him by the splinter groups, including the Marxian socialists. He felt that the socialists would be a greater menace in future, and therefore agreed to negotiate with the Centre Party. Diplomatic relations with the Vatican were resumed and the May Laws were mostly repealed. For the first time, this experienced diplomat had to confess that the *kulturkampf* had been his great blunder.

## Conflict with Socialists

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Bismarck turned his attention to deal with a far more serious danger to the German body politic, i.e., the rising trend in the country towards socialism. Ever since the advent of the industrial revolution in Germany, there was a growing awareness among the working class population about their rights—including the one to form a trade union for getting a better deal. Socialism caught the attention of workers after Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Capital*. The increasing demands of workers

for political and other rights caused concern to an orthodox and conservative *junker* like Bismarck.

With increasing socialist propaganda among the urban working class, the ensuing polls witnessed the election of nine socialists to the Reichstag (1874). The socialist groups of Germany formed a political party named 'Social Democratic Party' in 1875 and planned their strategy to win more seats in the 1877 election. Their candidates got nearly half a million votes and occupied 12 seats in the Reichstag. Bismarck became nervous at the sudden popularity of socialism with the German common masses. He devised ways and measures to curb their progress and enthusiasm. He believed that socialism was a curse and a serious menace to the integrity and sovereignty of the German state.

## Socialism gains Popularity

Despite high-handed treatment meted out to the socialists, socialism began to gain more adherents since it promised a better deal to workers in the form of limited working hours, decent wages and living quarters. In 1878, Bismarck launched his campaign against the socialists following two unsuccessful attempts made on the life of the emperor by some mischievous elements. He suppressed the socialist newspapers, their clubs and banned their meetings. Their leaders were taken into custody. Despite these persecutions, socialism could not be easily crushed. On the other hand, it became more popular and Bismarck felt disappointed at his failure to meet this threat. He introduced liberal measures. He introduced several reforms to please the workers and tried to take the wind out of the sail of the socialist movement. In the long run, he did not succeed. Therefore his war with socialism ended in his defeat.

## Resignation of Bismarck (1890)

Kaiser William I died in 1888, and was succeeded by his grandson Kaiser William II. The new emperor was the grandson of Queen Victoria of England. He was brought up on military traditions. In his early days he was a great admirer of Bismarck. After his coronation, he felt that he should guide the destiny of his country instead of the chancellor. He was determined to rule as well as to reign. Serious differences arose between

the new emperor and the old chancellor. Then Bismarck felt that he had no positive role to play, and therefore resigned. The new emperor accepted his resignation without much regret.

## Suggested Readings

1. Taylor, A.J.P., *Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman*.
2. Langer, W. L., *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890*.
3. Windell, George, C., *The Catholics and German Unity*.
4. Guenther, Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany*.

## Focus on the Balkans

*T*he Sultan and the Czar had no honest intentions of fulfilling the terms of the Treaty of Paris, therefore, the Eastern Question came to the surface again in the 1870s. In 1870, Russia, backed by Bismarck, repudiated the clauses of the terms relating to the neutralisation of the Black Sea. She maintained a powerful fleet there and fortified Sebastopol. The Sultan continued his old policy of suppressing his Christian subjects. Therefore it was no wonder that the subjects of Bosnia and Herzegovina revolted against him. Taking advantage of the confused situation, Bulgaria and Montenegro joined the revolt in 1875. The Sultan's anger knew no bounds. What followed was his wholesale extermination of 12,000 Bulgarian Christians. This atrocity provoked the conscience of European countries, particularly Russia. The latter went to their rescue in 1877, and the Russo-Turkish war followed (1877-78). The Turkish resistance was overcome after setbacks at Kars and Plevna. The Russian army marched triumphantly towards the Turkish capital, Constantinople. Turkey sued for peace. She concluded the Treaty of San Stefano with Russia by which the Sultan recognised the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania. He agreed for the creation of a big Bulgarian state to be controlled by Russia. The Sultan also agreed to carry out some liberal reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As for Russia, she was to get a part of Armenia, a large war indemnity and a strip of Dobrudja. Thus it looked as though the Porte had been finally beaten and taught a lesson. Alas this was not to be due to British intervention.

The Russian victory over Turkey in 1878, and subsequent benefits derived by Russia at the cost of her enemy excited the jealousy of European powers, particularly Britain. Her response was one of anger

and jealousy as symbolised in a song in the music halls of those days:

- We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,
- We've got the ships, we've got the men,
- We've got money too!

Similarly, Austria too felt extremely jealous of Russia's gains by the San Stefano Treaty. To a great extent Russia's advantages in this treaty dashed her own hopes of extending the sphere of influence in the near-East. The British government, backed by other powers, immediately demanded the revision of the San Stefano Treaty. Benjamin Disraeli went a step further by threatening Russia with a war if she did not agree to a substantial revision of the Treaty of San Stefano. The British ships were ordered to pass through the Dardenelles and the Russians were frightened. Russia was not prepared for another war with Britain. Realising this tense international situation, Bismarck agreed to host a Congress of European powers involved in this dispute and bring about a settlement.

## Congress of Berlin (1878)

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Bismarck convened an international conference at Berlin in 1878. The agenda of this Congress was to revise the San Stefano Treaty arrived at between Russia and Turkey. This treaty needed to be modified in accordance with the wishes of Britain and her allies. Russia fell into a trap set by Bismarck and agreed to a substantial modification of this treaty. The diplomats who came to Berlin included Lord Salisbury (Britain), Bismarck (Germany), Gorschakoff (Russia), Andrassy (Austria) and so on. When finally concluded, the Treaty of Berlin belied the hopes and ambitions of Russia. Her great ambition of founding the big state of Bulgaria was cancelled by the other powers. The Bigger Bulgaria was divided into three parts. The northern part alone was recognised as an autonomous state, subject to control of Turkey and payment of annual tribute. The southeastern part was given back to the Sultan on condition that a Christian governor with some powers should rule over it. The third part consisting of Macedonia and Adrianople was restored to the direct rule of the Sultan.

Secondly, Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro were given the status of

independent principalities. Rumania lost Bessarabia to Russia and received a part of Dobrudja from the latter. Unfortunately, Serbia was hemmed in on all sides by the Austrian Empire. Her greatest regret was that Austria-Hungary was awarded the occupation and administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the nominal sovereignty of Turkey.

Besides getting Bessarabia, Russia got the north of the Danubian delta, the lower part of Pruth and the Armenian districts. Taking the whole treaty into consideration one would be justified in saying that Russia got paltry gains and suffered in the bargain at the Congress of Berlin. Britain got Cyprus for saving Turkey. The only country which fared better than all others was Greece. Her boundaries extended further north as the result of the award. In the end the Sultan guaranteed, as usual, full liberty to all his Christian subjects at a par with his Muslim subjects. Lord Beaconsfield, the British delegate, went home with pride that he had brought "peace with honour".

## Consequences

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From what happened subsequently, the Treaty of Berlin will remain significant in diplomatic history. Lord Salisbury, after pondering over the events of the First World War, confessed that Britain backed the wrong horse (namely Turkey). Austria and Serbia hated each other, especially when Austria annexed the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina into her empire. She stood in the way of the Union of Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro. Bismarck's Dreikaiserbund Treaty broke after Russia was convinced that he had played a trick on her. It was because of his treachery that she lost whatever she had gained by the Treaty of San Stefano. Therefore she began to look forward to a close alliance with France and Britain.

The Island of Cyprus did not prove to be of great military and strategic importance to Britain as subsequent events showed. In 1885, Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia were unified because the people elected the same prince to rule over them. In 1886, Russia fortified Batavia, and in 1896 Turkey carried out wholesale massacre of the people of Armenia. The Turkish rule created great unrest in Macedonia. Greece and Turkey fought a battle in 1897 since the former desired the liberation of Crete. In

other words, the Treaty of Berlin proved to be ineffective in containing the growing upsurge of Balkan nationalism on one side and European rivalry on the other. A chronic state of unrest in the Balkan region led to the Balkan wars which in turn, became a prelude to the outbreak of the Great War (1914-18).

## The Eastern Question (1879-1914)

During the last phase of the Eastern Question Europe witnessed the rapid disintegration of the Ottoman empire in the face of mounting nationalism among the Balkan countries. The big powers were also caught up in this whirlpool of Balkan politics. There were revolts and massacres within the Turkish empire. There was no hope this time that the empire would be in a position to safeguard its own territorial sovereignty and integrity. Repeated clashes with the subject nationalities weakened the fabric of the nation.

In 1882 Britain, already in possession of Cyprus, occupied Egypt which was owing its nominal allegiance to the Sultan. In 1885, the Turkish governor of eastern Roumelia was expelled by the Bulgars and its territory was annexed to the fully autonomous province of Bulgaria. Thus Bulgaria grew in size and strength and posed a threat to the Ottoman empire. In 1896 the Greeks in Crete revolted, and the Greeks on the mainland went to their support after declaring war on Turkey (1897). But the Greeks lost the battle and the Sultan was about to inflict heavy punishment. Fortunately, the big powers such as Russia, Britain, France and Italy intervened to protect the Greeks. In this process of bringing about peace Turkey lost practically the whole island of Crete.

The Armenian revolt of 1894 directed against the Sultan produced ghastly retaliation. About 10,000 Christians must have been killed. The powers protested and the Sultan promised necessary reforms in order to pacify them.

# THE BALKAN NATIONS 1878

- Wavy line: TURKISH FRONTIER IN 1789
- Wavy line: TURKISH FRONTIER IN 1878
- Dash-dot line: TURKISH FRONTIER IN 1914
- Dash-dot-dot line: PROPOSED BULGARIAN BOUNDARY  
BY TREATY OF SAN STEFANO



In 1908, the 'Young Turks' staged a coup and the Sultan was forced to grant a liberal constitution—a constitution which he had promulgated on the eve of his accession to the throne. In 1909, the Sultan was deposed, and his brother, Mohammed V, was chosen to succeed him.

In 1908 the Bulgarian king, Ferdinand, severed his links with the Ottoman empire by declaring his independence. He played an important role in forming the Balkan League to fight the Turks. Taking advantage of the Turkish revolution of 1908, Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina partly as a move to check the growing Serbian aggressiveness. Serbia was provoked because she wanted these two provinces for herself. The Austrian annexation of these two provinces had far-reaching consequences as subsequent events were to prove. For years, Serbia was hoping to add to her territory these two provinces and Montenegro where a large number of Serbs lived. Serbia was also angry because the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria blocked her access to the Adriatic Sea.

## The Italo-Turkish War (1911-12)

The young Turk movement gained great momentum after the 1908 evolution. In their enthusiasm to bring about national unity, the young Turks went ahead with what is called 'Turkification'. The Turkish language was imposed as the official and sole language of the government. It created great unrest among several subject nationalities. Therefore, there was a growing unrest in the Turkish provinces.

Taking advantage of the disaffection of Christian subjects, Italy invaded the Turkish provinces of Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Italy, like other European powers, desired to establish colonies. She attacked Turkey and the war would have prolonged had it not been for the intervention of the Balkan League. The Balkan League was formed in 1912 and was getting ready to attack the Turkish empire. Finding herself confronted with two enemies—the Balkan League powers and Italy—Turkey sued for peace with Italy in October 1912. According to the Treaty of Lausanne, Italy snatched away Tripoli from Turkey. Hezen says that the great significance "lay in the fact that it began again the process, arrested since 1878, of the violent dismemberment of the Turkish Empire . . ."

## First Balkan War (1912)

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Although the members of the League—Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro—had no love lost between them, yet they united at this juncture to avenge the wrong done to them by the atrocities committed by the Turkish Sultan. The massacres of the Greeks, Bulgars and the Serbians in Macedonia could not be easily forgotten. The war began soon after the Italo-Turkish war. The allies entered Macedonia and won a resounding victory against the Turks. The Bulgars won many battles and made rapid advance towards Chitaldja line of fortifications, about 25 miles to the Turkish capital. The war continued when negotiations failed in London, and subsequent victories of the allies forced Turkey to come to the negotiating table.

## The Treaty of London (30 May 1913)

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The Treaty of London was signed by which Turkey ceded most of the territories that lay in the west of the line drawn from Enos on the Aegean Sea to Midia on the Black Sea. The island of Crete was ceded to the great powers who in turn gave it to Greece. Greece also acquired the southern part of Macedonia and Salonika. Serbia got the northern part of Macedonia. Bulgaria received Thrace and a part of the Aegean coast. The Turkish empire shrank considerably in size after this treaty. It was difficult to believe that she once ruled a large empire embracing three continents. Unfortunately, the great powers such as Germany and Austria-Hungary did not come to her rescue. However, these two powers compelled Serbia to relinquish some Adriatic ports to Turkey. Thus Serbia was deprived of having any access to the sea—a fact which brought her into conflict with Bulgaria in Macedonia.

The significance of the war lay in the fact that Balkan nationalism was rising to a high pitch with rival Western powers having high stakes in the conflicts. There was a conspicuous decline in the Ottoman empire. The situation in the Balkans remained highly volatile. Any small incident could have international repercussions.

## Second Balkan War (1913)

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Bulgaria was not satisfied with what she got and Serbia became unhappy because she could not gain access to the Adriatic Sea. Backed by Austria, the Bulgars now attacked Serbia and Greece for acquiring a section of Macedonia which was mostly inhabited by the Bulgars. Thus the Second Balkan war broke out within one year. Serbia was supported by Montenegro, Rumania and Turkey. It was no easy task fighting alone against five powers and hence the showdown. Bulgaria was forced to accept the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) by which she lost whatever she had gained by the First Balkan war. Serbia and Greece got back parts of Macedonia. Rumania gained some valuable territory and Turkey received Adrianople. Bulgaria hated Greece and Serbia. The war restored tremendous pride and confidence in Serbia.

While the map of Europe was reshaped with the emergence and expansion of Balkan countries, the Balkan wars proved costly in terms of money and casualties. Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Rumania grew in strength and size. Their ambitions began to grow and they were not happy with whatever they got. They wanted to expand at the cost of others. On the eve of the First World War, a new state of Albania appeared. Serbia became proud and confident after victory and was ready to pick up a quarrel with Austria. She encouraged revolts in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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2. Price, W. H. C., *The Balkan Cockpit: The Political and Military Story of the Balkan Wars*.
3. Taylor, A.J.P., *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*.
4. Medlicott, W.N., *Congress of Berlin and After, a Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement, 1878-80*.

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## New Imperialism

The term 'Imperialism' simply means "the policy and practice of forming and maintaining an empire". The European powers followed this concept from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. Britain followed by France, Portugal, Spain and Holland established trade connections with American and Asian countries. Merchants and businessmen considered it important to have colonies in order to gain immense profits. Thus rivalry among European powers to establish colonies and effectively control them for their own benefits were not uncommon during those centuries. During the first half of the eighteenth century several statesmen realised the futility of establishing colonies. It was during this time that old imperialism declined very rapidly. France lost her colonies in North America after the Seven Years War. Britain lost thirteen American colonies after the latter won independence following a protracted struggle between 1776 and 1783. Spain too lost her colonies in South America during the early nineteenth century. The 'white man's burden' became too heavy for maintaining colonial empires. In course of time the "trouble and expense of administering colonial empires outweighed any possible benefits". In Britain there was the prevailing sentiment that colonies would eventually become independent. Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, wrote in 1852, "These wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years and are millstones around our necks". In France, Turgot said, "Colonies are like fruits that drop off when they are ripe". So around the first half of the nineteenth century the European countries were tired of establishing new colonies. In Germany too Bismarck did not pay much attention to establishing colonies.

However, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there

occurred the glorious revival of colonialism on the part of the Western powers. This is called 'New Imperialism'. Many colonial societies were established in Europe to encourage the establishment of new colonies. Merchants, traders, adventurers, capitalists and industrialists all liked the establishment of colonies in Africa and Asia. In 1872, even Disraeli, who had earlier decried imperialism, began to evince a keen interest in reviving imperialism. In France two men, Gambetta and Jules Ferry, came forward with some ideas about likely benefits an imperialist country would derive from establishing new colonies. In course of time Bismarck also bowed to the demands of his countrymen for establishing colonies in Africa and Asia. It was realised during the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the world was after all a small place. This idea became apparent after the improvements effected in the means of transport and communication. Steamships began to sail across from one continent to another. Similarly, the railways moved across desert land. New inventions and weapons made it possible for the Western powers to dominate over Afro-Asian countries which had not made much progress in civilisation.

The old *laissez faire* idea became unpopular as time passed. The mercantilist idea became popular once again. The 1870s witnessed the resurgence of imperialism on account of increasing competition among rival powers on one hand, and the imposition of tariffs on important goods on the other. Therefore, the European manufacturers who had produced goods far in excess of their own requirements could only think of disposing them of in the newly established colonies. Thus from all these points of view, establishment of new colonies became an important facet of foreign policy of the industrialised countries of Europe. Secondly, the industrial capitalists thought in terms of investing their surplus capital in the newly established colonies for various reasons.

### Demand for Raw Materials and Foodgrains

Colonies served manifold purposes. They provided raw materials for the imperialist countries. It must be remembered that the Industrial Revolution was making rapid progress in almost all Western countries during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Industrial nations of the

Western world required huge quantities of raw materials which were not available in their own countries. They were very much required in order to keep their factories fully engaged. The Western powers naturally looked forward to establishing overseas colonies for exploitation. For example, India provided plenty of raw materials to her colonial master, Britain. When the civil war broke out in America, India started exporting cotton to British mills in Liverpool and Manchester to keep the textile mills busy. Similarly, western powers obtained rubber, hemp, coconuts, vegetable oils, tea, coffee, fruits, sugar, silk, petroleum, coal, iron, copper, zinc and other goods and metals from their respective colonies. They got them at cheap prices.

The industrial nations of western Europe established new colonies which provided overseas markets. Trade rivalries in Europe brought about the introduction of tariff system and therefore the Western countries turned towards their respective colonies to dispose of their excess goods. For example, cotton was sent from India to feed the British textile mills, and the latter in exchange sent their manufactured goods to Indian markets. Thus the Western imperial powers gained two-fold profit, that was at the time of purchase of raw materials in the colonies and also at the time of the sale of their manufactured goods. There came a time when the British industrialists thought in terms of investing their capital in the colonies. This would bring about more profits than what they could at first think of.

That was how industrial capitalism began to grow and subsequently it spread to the colonies also. The industrial capitalists started investing their capital in the colonies. In India, the British capitalists started building railways. Their venture brought huge profit. Similarly other imperial powers started building railways, undertook mining and managed communication systems and so on, in countries of Africa and Asia. In 1913 Britain's overseas investments touched twenty billion dollars. Similarly, France and Germany invested eight billion and five billion dollars respectively in their colonies during the same year.

The manifold profits derived by exploiting the respective colonies in Africa and Asia resulted in a headlong race for acquiring more colonies during the nineteenth century. "Trade follows the flag" became the maxim.

## Features of New Imperialism

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The New Imperialism was similar to the old in many respects. The motives behind acquiring colonies were “gospel, gold, and glory”. Colonial rivalries characterised the age of the new imperialism. The imperialists did not look forward to the establishment of colonies in the new continent. This time they were bent on exploiting the colonies of Africa and Asia. Thanks to the advancement of science and technology, these Western powers were able to easily defeat the native rulers in Africa and Asia.

## The Partition of Africa

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Africa, being the second largest continent on the earth, easily provided enough opportunities for European adventures for exploration. This continent enjoyed a wide variety of climates. It was having deserts and forests. The earliest attempt to retain control over Africa was made by France over the province of Algeria in 1830 and this happened during the time of King Charles X. He accomplished this to “stimulate patriotic pride in France”. During the early years, several explorers from Europe went to Africa in order to explore the interior lands. But they had to suffer a large number of hardships and therefore gave up their attempts. Some of them died and Africa came to be known as “the white man’s grave”. However, it was in 1840 that David Livingstone became interested in civilising Africa. He went there and explored the Zambezi River and the lake country – travelling a distance of about 30,000 miles in 30 years! Subsequently, Henry M Staneley, an American journalist, carried out some more explorations in wild Africa. Staneley became famous for finding out where Livingstone (many thought that the latter had died since there was no news about his whereabouts) had settled in wild Africa. Staneley gained great popularity by his lectures and books in which he narrated his thrilling adventures in Africa.

The exploration of the African continent attracted the attention of the Belgian King Leopold II. He convened an international conference for the purpose of spreading Christianity to the uncivilised continent of Africa. He appointed Staneley as his agent. Staneley explored the Congo region.

He signed treaties with native chiefs and established trading centres there. The French too were interested in spreading their influence over that region. They also signed treaties with other native chieftains. Claims and counterclaims between these two rival European powers came to be settled amicably. The River Congo became the dividing line, and France got the northern part and the Belgians the south. The Belgian Congo was called the Congo Free State and King Leopold established his control over it. In course of time his reign became most unpopular and the world came to know about his cruelty and extortion of the natives. Finally, in 1908, the Belgian king respected the popular opinion by handing over the administration of the Congo Free State to the Belgian Parliament. The new Belgian government introduced several economic and educational reforms in the Congo Free State.

## Anglo-French Rivalry in West Africa

Belgian colonisation of Congo made Britain and France jealous. These two powers tried to secure control over the fertile Niger Valley. Britain succeeded in acquiring the largest chunks of territory, namely, Nigeria and Gold Coast, and France acquired Sahara. Spain acquired a part of Morocco, Canary Islands, Rio de Oro, and Rio Muni. Germany which entered the race for colonies late acquired SouthWest Africa, Cameroon and Togoland.

Germany also acquired 60,000 square miles in East Africa. The man who was responsible for this large acquisition was Karl Peters. He signed treaties with many native chiefs. In course of time Britain and France also staked their claims to East Africa. In the end an understanding was reached by many rival powers. Britain obtained some territories in British East Africa. France acquired the big island of Madagascar. Italy also staked its claim to East Africa. She obtained Eritrea and Somaliland along the Red Sea coast and the Indian Ocean respectively. The Germans continued to establish more and more colonies in the southern part of Africa.

The Germans established a protectorate in southwest Africa. The Portuguese obtained Angola and Mozambique. A young Englishman, Cecil Rhodes went to Africa to make a fortune. He entered the Cape

Colony and made a fortune. He entered politics and subsequently became the prime minister. He desired to build a vast British empire stretching from Cairo in Egypt to Cape Town in the south. Unfortunately, he could not fulfil his dream.

North Africa became the scene of intense political activities among rival European powers. As mentioned earlier, France acquired Sahara, Algeria and Tunisia. The British extended their control over Egypt in 1882 when the Egyptian ruler, Ismail, could not return the borrowed money from French and British bankers. Subsequently, the British moved southwards, defeated the Muslim fanatics, and conquered Sudan. Meanwhile, the French too came to Sudan, and at Fashoda the two belligerent forces met. It appeared that a war would break out. But the crisis was averted by the timely action of the French prime minister. Subsequently, Britain and France came to an understanding about their 'spheres of influence' in North Africa. Britain was allowed to occupy Egypt and Sudan while France was to have her preponderance in Morocco. In the meantime the Italians failed to conquer Ethiopia because they suffered a defeat at the hands of the natives at Adowa. It was only in 1911-12 that Italy acquired Libya and Tripoli after a war with Turkey. Over the whole of the African continent, only Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent. Thus the Western powers colonised the different regions of the continent of Africa during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

## New Imperialism in Asia

## The Far East

The Manchu Empire in China was rapidly declining during the middle of the nineteenth century. Many foreigners, beginning with the Portuguese, went to China for trade. But the Chinese emperor treated foreigners with contempt. They were described as barbarians. In course of time the foreign traders, mostly coming from Western countries, tried to entice the Chinese officials by bribing them.

## Opium Wars

It was over the smuggling of opium by the British traders that war broke out with China in 1840. For a long time the ships of British East India Company were unloading chests of opium on the Chinese coast. The Manchu government issued an imperial order banning this trade. However, with the connivance of corrupt Chinese officials, the British started smuggling opium. When a new Chinese commissioner prevented the smuggling of opium, the British became angry. With the support of the British government, the ships of British East India Company bombarded the Chinese ports in South China Sea. Subsequently, the Imperial government found it difficult to defend itself from foreign attack. It agreed to negotiate a treaty with the British. The Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842. According to the terms of the treaty, China agreed to cede Hongkong and open five Chinese ports for British trade. Furthermore, she agreed to pay an indemnity for the loss suffered by the British company. The opium trade was regulated. China signed similar treaties with France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the USA.

In course of time, many other Western powers such as Russia and Germany became interested in establishing trade connections. The second opium war was fought (1856-58) when a ship carrying contraband and hoisting a British flag was attacked and a French missionary was killed in the interior of China. The French emperor, Napoleon III, proposed Britain of a joint military expedition against the Chinese. The Anglo-French naval squadrons bombarded the entrance to the port of Canton and other Chinese ports. Finally, the Imperial government of China agreed to negotiate another treaty with Britain and France. The Treaty of Tientsin was signed in 1858. According to the terms of the treaty the Imperial government threw open eleven more Chinese ports for foreign trade, granted extra-territorial rights and paid compensation. It signed similar treaties with other powers like Russia and Germany. All these powers were able to establish their consular offices in all the ports (Canton, Foochow, Hong Kong, Amoy, Ningpo and so on) and subsequently the Chinese emperor received their ambassadors in his imperial court at Peking. Thus China's weakness was

exploited by foreign powers during the second half of the nineteenth century.

## Spheres of Influence

In course of time the Western powers began to establish their 'spheres of influence' by conquering a number of dependencies of China. For example, France conquered Cochinchina, Cambodia, Tonkin and Annam. Britain established its influence in the Yangtze Valley and conquered Burma. China recognised the British control over Burma in 1886. Russia extended her influence over Manchuria. Japan subsequently defeated China in 1895 and secured Formosa and other islands. Germany acquired areas like Shantung. The Western powers became jealous of Japan's recent acquisitions. They demanded the revision of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Much of what Japan got from China after the Sino-Japanese war was lost. Thus rivalries existed among European powers themselves and also with the newly rising power in Asia, Japan.

Russia built Trans-Siberian Railway up to Vladivostok. She received port Arthur from China and some concessions in Manchuria. Britain obtained a lease on the Chinese harbour of Wei-Hai-Wei. The French obtained railway contracts and extended control over the Bay of Kwang-Chowwan. The Germans obtained a lease on Kiachow Bay from China for ninety-nine years. Thus China lay prostrate at the feet of foreigners at the end of the nineteenth century.

## Boxer Revolt

The exploitation of their country by foreign powers provoked a fanatical section of the Chinese called Boxers in 1900. They were afraid that their country would fall into the hands of foreigners and therefore broke in rebellion. The rebellion was directed against the Christian missionaries, Chinese-Christians, and foreign nationals. They murdered the Japanese chancellor and German minister. Violence and bloodshed became the order of the day and the Manchu government was in secret sympathy. The Boxers threatened the lives of foreign nationals and most of them fled to the Chinese capital to take shelter in their respective embassies. All their embassies were surrounded by Boxers. For six weeks this siege continued and it led to a joint expedition by five powers (Britain, Russia, France, Germany and Italy) supported by Japan and the USA for the purpose of relieving the siege. This joint military expedition succeeded in quelling the revolt after heavy bloodshed.

## The Boxer Protocol

The Manchu government confessed its complicity over the outbreak of Boxer rebellion and accepted to pay a compensation of \$67,000,000 plus additional reparation for the murder of the Japanese chancellor and German minister. Had it not been for the “Open Door Policy” advocated by the USA, China would have been partitioned by the victorious Allies. The Manchu Empire fell in 1911 after the death of Chinese Empress Dowager (1908).

## The Impact of the West on Japan

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Japan enjoyed an era of splendid isolationism for nearly 200 years until Commodore Mathew Perry’s visits in 1853 and 1854. He commanded a few US warships and came to Japan with a letter from the President of the United States for establishing trade links. His second visit became necessary since he wanted to know the response of the Japanese to the US offer. The Shogunate government opened two of her ports for American trade. Within a short time the other Western powers also demanded similar concessions. Thus Japan’s seclusion ended. But Perry’s visits led to far-reaching consequences in that country. Having yielded to the pressure of Western powers for trade concessions and extra-territorial rights the popularity and prestige of the Tokugawa Shogunate was deeply hurt. The Samurai (warrior class) shifted their loyalty from the Shogunate (military government) to the titular emperor. After a few years of domestic troubles the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown in 1868. The civil war came to an end with the Meiji Emperor being reinstalled.

## South Asia: India, Burma and Ceylon

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The advent of the Europeans began in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They (the Portuguese, Dutch, French and the English) came as traders. However, it was not until the middle of the eighteen century that they began to entertain political ambitions. The European wars began to have their echo in India and the Carnatic wars

began between main rivals, the French and the British companies. After the three Carnatic wars the French power in India declined and the British remained supreme. The native rulers were weak and divided and had no army capable of matching the strength and technical superiority of the British. Robert Clive who had played an important role in the defeat of the French in the Carnatic was sent to Bengal to deal with Nawab Siraj-ud-daula who was supposed to have treated the English badly. Clive hatched a plot with the Indian traitors, and with Mir Jajur's (commander-in-chief of Bengal's army) help defeated the Nawab's army in the famous Battle of Plassey (1757). In a short time, the British company servants became the real rulers. In 1764 the new Nawab, Mir Kasim, took the help of the Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal emperor and opposed the English in the Battle of Buxar. The combined armies were routed and the British became supreme lords of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The expansion of British power continued during the times of Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, Lord Wellesley, and Lord Dalhousie. It was only during Bentinck's time that there was some respite. Lord Dalhousie's imperial policies resulted in the conquest of Punjab and Burma. Before the middle of the nineteenth century the British had practically controlled the whole of India, some acquired by conquests, some by annexations, and some by treaties with native chiefs. The great uprising of 1857 compelled the British government to take over the responsibility of governing India from the British East India Company. Accordingly, after the Queen's Proclamation, a parliamentary act was passed in 1858 which provided for the desired transfer of authority from the Company to the British Crown.

Britain gained control over Ceylon in the early nineteenth century. Ceylon originally, came under Dutch rule. After the defeat of Napoleon the Congress of Vienna forced Holland to cede Ceylon to Britain.

## **Near East and Middle East**

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In the Near and Middle East, the Russian and British influence began to pervade. Russia colonised the Muslim Turkestan and finally absorbed this territory into her empire. Russia, after her setback in the Congress of Berlin, began to look forward to the Middle East for colonisation. She

exploited the weakness of Persia to her advantage by establishing her 'sphere of influence' in the north. Britain was equally eager to check the growing influence of Russia. She established her 'sphere of influence' in the southern part of Persia. The other Arab countries like Iraq, Syria and Arabia came to experience some "Europeanisation" during the second half of the nineteenth century. Afghanistan remained neutral and retained her independence, despite the aggressive acts of contending powers—Britain and Russia.

The New Imperialism reached its highest watermark before the outbreak of the Great War. After the Great War the Western Allies divided among themselves the colonial territories of Germany in Africa and the Far East. They received these territories as mandates.

## Suggested Readings

1. Schmidt Helmut, D., *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word.*
2. Langer, W. L., *The Diplomacy of Imperialism.*
3. Johnston, Sir H. H., *A History of Colonisation of Africa by Alien Races.*

# 19

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## The Great War (1914-18)

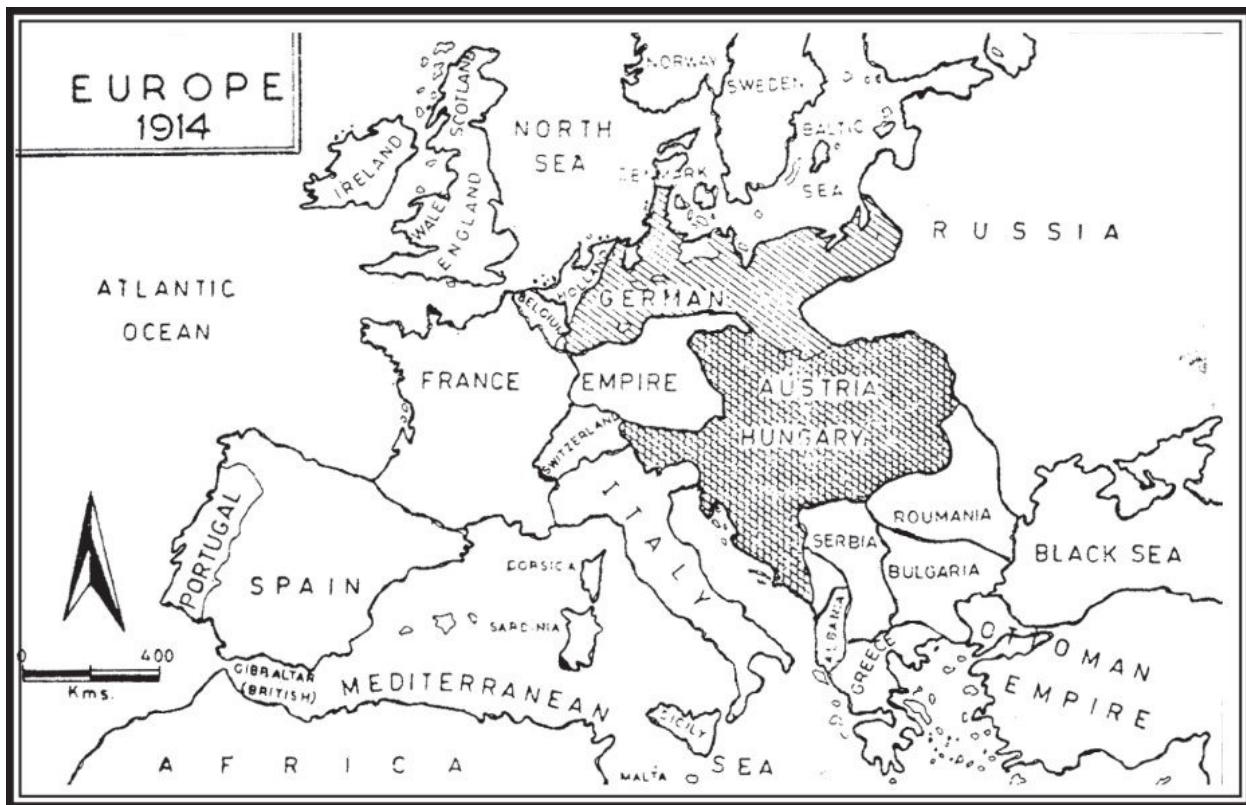
### Extreme Nationalism

*T*he rising tide of nationalism swept across the European continent throughout the nineteenth century affecting almost all parts. The work of the Congress of Vienna was set at nought, and many monarchies perished by this sweeping gale. Every subject-nation liberated herself from the shackles of alien rule, most notably Belgium, Italy and Germany. Similarly in the Balkans, many Christian countries became free from the tyranny of the Ottoman empire. It looked as though Europe went through a blaze, the incendiary material being nationalism. But everywhere there was a pause after this holocaust, but not in Germany. There were still some subject nationalities, such as the Poles, Finns, Letts, Czechs, Yugoslavs and so on who struggled hard to become free. Thus it may be seen that on the eve of the Great War aggressive nationalism continued to be a disturbing phenomenon. Born out of war, Germany pursued an aggressive career to fulfil her imperial ambitions. "Strong nations, rigidly and patriotically pursuing their own national desires, have inevitably clashed with one another." It was unfortunate that, in the absence of an international peacekeeping machinery, these strong nations violated international laws with impunity. They vitiated the international atmosphere to such an extent that the last twenty-five years preceding the Great War came to be known as the era of armed peace.

### Hostile Military Alliances

One of the fundamental causes which brought about the Great War was

the formation of two hostile alliances—the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. The former was established by Bismarck mainly to isolate France from the rest of Europe with a view to protect the newly born German empire (1871). While keeping France thus isolated, Bismarck was careful not to alienate the sympathies of the other great powers—Russia and Britain. However, his policy of relative restraint was thrown to the winds by the new German emperor, Kaiser William III, after 1890. After the old Chancellor's exit (1890), the German emperor began to entertain a grandiose plan for world conquest. He designed a new policy—the *Weltpolitik*—which was to dominate the rest of his career. The new policy implied that Germany should no longer remain happy with her present position, but aim at world domination through means of conquests as well as expansion of trade and commerce. Already Germany had progressed rapidly in the industrial field and looked forward to capturing world markets. Similarly, she hoped to establish a chain of colonies in Asia and Africa. Her entry into a race for colonies made the other powers jealous and heightened tensions. Germany allowed the Reinsurance treaty to lapse, and Russia was not keen to renew it.



## Dual Alliance

It was not long before a new alliance was formed and it was directed against the Triple Alliance. While Russia was annoyed by Austro-German influence in the Near East, France too was not feeling safe. As the interests of both coincided, they came closer. France was prepared to supply armaments and offer loans to Russia to build her railways. In return Russia was to help France to counteract the influence of Austria and Germany in Central Europe. The Franco-Russian friendship between 1891 and 1895 culminated in an alliance—the Dual Alliance—directed against Germany. When published in 1895, it declared each would come to the other's rescue if Germany attacked any one of them. This defence treaty provided, among other things, mutual consultations by commanders from time to time if there was any threat from any one of the members of the Triple Alliance. The agreement mentioned even the strength of forces they should muster to fight Germany.

The next logical step of including Britain into their fold was delayed on account of Franco-British rivalry. Both these countries were on bad

terms because France regarded the British occupation of Egypt as an extremely hostile move. Similarly, England did not like French control of Tunis as well as her plans to take over Morocco. The 'Fashoda' incident in 1898 nearly brought these two countries on the brink of war. However, it was averted by Declarde, the French foreign minister, who shrewdly "calculated that English friendship might be more valuable to Fashoda or half a million miles of the Sudan". Again Britain could not be brought into the fold of the alliance because Lord Salisbury had kept her in "splendid isolation". In the meantime, Britain made overtures of friendship to Germany (German emperor being a grandson of Queen Victoria) but it was spurned. With the death of Salisbury, Britain broke off her splendid isolationism and moved towards establishing a close link with France (the new British king, Edward VII developed a contempt for his nephew, the German emperor). Britain signed a treaty with Japan, an Asiatic power, in 1902. She took the next step of arriving at an understanding with France (called the Entente Cordial) in 1904 over mutual spheres of influence in the African continent. While France permitted Britain to have a 'free hand' in Egypt and the Sudan, the latter recognised French claims over Morocco. The relations between these two countries became cordial and their respective generals discussed even the military and naval strategy to be adopted in the event of a German attack. Germany did not like Declarde's role in forming this alliance and promptly threatened France. The French foreign minister was forced to resign to pacify Germany. At that time Russia was busy fighting Japan.

## **Triple Entente**

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The next logical step followed. Britain and Russia began to have parleys to end their quarrels, particularly in the Near East and South Asia. They came to an agreement over their mutual spheres of influence in Persia. Britain was to dominate over the northern part and Russia, the southern part, with a buffer zone in between. Thus Russia no longer posed a threat to Afghanistan or India. Another broad agreement was reached over the Balkans between the two. It may be noted that Britain ceased to attach importance to this region because nationalism had reached its peak there, a clear indication that Russian influence would henceforth be minimal.

With all obstacles removed, France, Britain and Russia established the Triple Entente in 1907 to meet the threat posed by the Triple Alliance. Thus Europe was divided into two military camps ready to fight.

## Colonial Rivalries in Africa

The nineteenth century witnessed the rapid colonisation of the African continent. For example, Britain established colonies in the south and dominated over Egypt and the Sudan. France focused her attention on colonising northern parts of Africa, namely, Morocco, Tunisia and the Sahara. The Belgians colonised the Congo region and the Portuguese, Mozambique and Angola. The Spaniards took the northwesterly coast of Africa and the Italians, Somalia and Eritria. The last to enter into this race for colonies was Germany. She took South West Africa and East Africa. Although the partition was smooth, subsequently it led to clash of ambitions and intense rivalries. Italy cast its covetous eyes on Tunisia but it was occupied by France. Therefore she gave vent to her frustration by joining Germany and Austria to form the Triple Alliance. With the help of the latter countries she hoped to obtain another independent kingdom of Africa namely, Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Between 1885 and 1892 she could add coastal strip territories of Somaliland and Eritrea. She made an attempt to conquer the whole of Abyssinia but her troops suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of natives at Adowa in 1896. In 1911, Italy declared war on Turkey and acquired Tripoli. The Turkish navy was not strong enough to resist the invasion. The Italian adventures in Africa caused alarm to Germany who had coveted Tripoli herself. Again she was not happy because Turkey had become her fast friend. It was also a fact that all political storms before the outbreak of the Great War were taking place in northern Africa.

## Armament Race

The international situation turned from bad to worse with the commencement of an armament race. The great powers were suspicious of one another and were haunted by the fear of a surprise attack. To ward off this danger they kept their army in a state of readiness. France was afraid of Germany and got ready to face the enemy at any time. For this purpose she introduced conscription. Similarly, Germany was preparing herself for war. Her industries started manufacturing modern weapons. To ward off any threat to her shipping services, she began to build dreadnoughts—battleships. The construction of a powerful fleet by Germany alarmed Britain. A British admiral, John Fisher, talked about an impending war with Germany. He further said that Germany may take some more years to catch up with the pace with which Britain was building her own dreadnoughts. Unless the Kiel Canal was deepened, German fleet would be vulnerable to British naval action. Britain organised an expeditionary force to serve on the continent. In the meantime, a war gripped the minds of the Germans. Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest became popular. Between 1909 and 1911 Germany constructed nine dreadnoughts while Britain built eighteen. Britain was taking steps to meet the naval threat posed by the German fleet in the North Sea region leaving the Mediterranean Sea to the French. A British admiral prophesied that Britain would be waging war against Germany in October 1914 and suggested to the king to launch a naval action, similar to the one Britain had taken against the Danish fleet during the Napoleonic time, to destroy the new German fleet. During 1912-13 Germany passed laws to raise the strength of her troops to the level of 870,000. France and Russia extended the term of compulsory military service to their new recruits.

## Economic Nationalism

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Besides the armament race, what exacerbated the strained relations between nations was the economic competition. Britain and Germany entered into a competition to dispose of their manufactured goods all over the world in general, and in South American countries in particular.

Economic nationalism took deep roots in Britain and Germany. Both explored the possibility of finding new markets to remove their glut. Britain enjoyed a monopoly of trade in South America. The entry of German businessmen in this region disturbed her deeply. In course of time a cut-throat competition strained their relations.

## **Tensions in Africa**

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At the turn of the century, it may not be an exaggeration to say that the world was in a state of perpetual turmoil till the Great War broke out. The ambitions of the great powers belonging to rival alliances clashed. The storm signals came from North Africa and the Balkans. After the Fashoda incident, the next place of conflict was to be Morocco. Germany put forward her claims to Morocco despite the French control and demanded that the future of Morocco be settled by an international conference. The German emperor even paid a surprise visit to Tangier (1905) to buttress German claim over Morocco and promised protection to the Sultan from French interference. This issue was revolved at the Algeciras Conference held in 1906 in favour of France. Britain and Russia upheld the French claims over Morocco. The powers of the Triple Entente won their first diplomatic victory. Germany was not happy and therefore precipitated another crisis—the Agadir Crisis—in 1911 by sending gunboats to Agadir port (Morocco) supposedly to protect the German interests in violation of the Algeciras accord. The German violation provoked both France and Britain, and the latter warned Germany of the terrible consequences. It was then that Germany withdrew her gunboats. Similarly, when France occupied Tunis (North Africa), Italy was quite disappointed and looked towards Abyssinia as the next object of her colonial acquisition. Therefore, to ensure free access to this object she joined the Austro-German Dual Alliance with a view to secure their support. However, her campaign to conquer Abyssinia turned out to be a tragic episode. Her troops suffered a disgraceful defeat at Adowa (1896). As already mentioned Italy conquered Tripoli from Turkey which dealt a blow to Turkish-German friendship.

## **Balkan Crises**

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The rise of Young Turks and their subsequent action in deposing Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1909 resulted in fresh outbursts of revolts and the Balkan countries took full advantage of the chaos. Austria-Hungary declared the end of Turkish rule over the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and annexed them. Bulgaria declared herself totally independent from Turkish hold. The Italians took Tripoli in 1911. In 1912 the Balkan powers formed the Balkan League to attack Turkey. The Balkan wars resulted in the shrinkage of the Turkish empire and heightened international tensions. Serbia became bold and desired to unite all territories inhabited by Serbs, including Bosnia and Herzegovina which had been annexed by Austria-Hungary. Serbia encouraged the people there to agitate for their merger with herself. This was bound to complicate the situation. She received moral support for her stand from her big brother, Russia (the Serbs and Russians belong to Slav race). Serbia's attempt to build a big kingdom out of Serb-populated areas looked as though she was determined to destroy the multi-racial Austro-Hungarian Empire.

## Ferdinand Assassinated

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand (heir to the Austrian throne) and his wife were assassinated in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, by a group of fanatical Serbs. The news of this tragedy shocked many countries. Although the Serbian government had some vague idea about what was going to happen, it did not forewarn Austria. The murder of their Crown Prince and his wife resulted in an ultimatum being sent to Serbia for immediate compliance of certain terms. Serbia's polite reply containing refusal of these terms did not pacify Austria-Hungary. Backed to the hilt by Germany, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Russia mobilised her forces in support of Serbia. Germany entered the fray by demanding the demobilisation of Russian forces, and on failing to receive any reply declared war on her. Therefore, Germany did not give an opportunity to Austria and Serbia to sort out their differences and precipitated the outbreak of the Great War. France received an ultimatum from Germany to remain neutral. On failing to receive a satisfactory reply, Germany declared war on France also. Italy remained

aloof by declaring her neutrality. When German troops violated the Belgian borders and thereby broke the Belgian Neutrality treaty (1839), Britain declared war on Germany. By a secret treaty signed on August 1, 1914, Bulgaria joined on the side of Germany in September 1915. The war was fought in all the continents except Australia. Italy forsook her allies and joined the war to help Britain, France and Russia in 1915.

## German Offensive

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Germany was always the first to strike, therefore, enjoyed the initial advantages. She wanted to gobble up France even before the Russians mobilised their entire forces against her. Finding that the French border was fortified her forces launched an offensive against her from the Belgian side—Meuse Valley—and came close to the French capital, Paris. With the help of a British expeditionary force, the French troops stopped the Germans at the Marne River. Then followed the famous trench warfare. Both sides dug up trenches in the northeastern France and fought. Germany sent a large contingent of her forces to fight the Russians in the east.

## Russia Routed

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In the meantime, Russia came to the rescue of France by launching attacks on Germany and Austria-Hungary in the East. In Eastern Prussia, the Russian army was surrounded and defeated at Tannenburg. A second Russian army also met a similar fate but made a hasty retreat. The third attacked Austria-Hungary but the German troops stopped their offensives. Turkey, Austria and Germany won a series of victories against Russia after inflicting heavy losses. When Bulgaria joined the central powers, together they crushed Russia's protege, Serbia. By 1915 the central powers had dented all attacks of the Entente powers. The French and British attempts to help Russia in a big way were foiled. Italy left the Triple Alliance and joined on the side of the Allies when she was promised some territory after the war. Her offensive against the central powers too did not meet with any success.

In 1916 the Germans concentrated their efforts to capture the strategic French fortress of Verdun to enfeeble the morale of French soldiers.

Despite four months of repeated attacks resulting in terrible slaughter, the French held on to their fort. Germany had to give up her attempts. In the meantime, the Russians gained some time, regrouped their forces and attacked Austria-Hungary and gained some territories. Rumania joined her but was defeated by Germans. The war exhausted Russia and her troops were deserting. France and Italy thought of surrender and Britain alone remained unscathed. But her prime minister was forced to resign. Germany and her friends too were tired but the final victory seemed to be theirs. So they continued the fight.

## Naval Battles

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A major naval action between the fleets of Britain and Germany took place at Jutland resulting in heavy losses on both sides but in the end the British reigned supreme over the seas. Germany's inability to challenge the British navy compelled her to start an unrestricted submarine warfare against merchant ships of neutral nations bringing supplies to the British Isles. The British fleet was also doing the same in the case of Germany. But Germany started sinking passenger liners also. The sinking of *Lusitania* enraged the Americans, and in March 1917, the USA declared war on Germany.

In the war the Russians suffered much on account of their disgraceful defeats and internal conditions forced the people to overthrow the Czarist regime. When Bolsheviks came to power after a second revolution under the leadership of Lenin, Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany and ended her hostilities. With Russia out of the war, Germany concentrated her efforts on the defeat of the Western Allies. The Allies suffered heavy setbacks. French armies mutinied, and the British suffered the worst disaster at the Paschendaele, with casualties mounting to 300,000. In the wake of this great tragedy came another. The Austrians inflicted a crushing defeat on Italians at Caporetto. Thus the year of 1917 proved disastrous for the Western Allies with exceptions—Allemby's NorthEastern 'side-show' and T.E. Lawrence's (nicknamed 'Lawrence of Arabia') success in encouraging the Arabs to revolt against their Turkish overlords.

## German Defeat

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The spring of 1918 witnessed the sagging morale of the Anglo-French troops, an advantage the Germans exploited by launching offensives. It was then realised by Britain and France that they should fight under one banner and a unified command; the combined armies were led by General Foch. The German advance met with spectacular success and they were almost within the striking distance of Paris. But their further advance was halted due to the timely help rendered by the American infantry and armaments. The Germans, who were totally exhausted after their brilliant advance in France, could not repel the counter-attacks of the Allies led by General Haig. The counter-attacks yielded rich dividends to the Allies, in that the supposedly impregnable Hindenburg line was stormed. The German defeat became imminent. In the meantime the Allies succeeded in defeating Bulgaria (September. 1918), Turkey (October. 1918) and Austria (October-November). The British promised independence to all subject nations in Austria if they joined hands with them. On November 11, 1918, the Germans signed the armistice agreement and ended hostilities. They sued for peace on the terms of President Wilson's 14 Points. The German emperor and his family suddenly left for a safe place in Holland after the outbreak of mutinies.

## Results of the War

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The war waged by 30 nations came to a halt after four years (with the exception of Turkey). During this time people all over the world suffered untold miseries. The war took its toll of eight and half a million lives. The wounded numbered nearly 29 million. It was estimated that the direct cost of the war reached just over 200 billion dollars, and the indirect cost, more than a 150 billion dollars. The world economy was in shambles. Poverty, food-shortage, inflation and unemployment became endemic and the people lost their confidence in the ability of their respective governments to tackle these serious problems. Hence the unpopularity of Western democracies and the spread of communism. Britain and France were bitter since the war was forced upon them by Germany. Their politicians were obsessed with the feeling of revenge. In Britain the

people's pent-up anger burst forth and they shouted slogans like "Hang the Kaiser", "Make Germans Pay", and "Down with Germany".

## Peace Treaties after the War

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The Paris Peace Conference was inaugurated on January 18, 1919, and representatives of 32 nations came to attend. They were mostly prime ministers, ruling heads, foreign ministers or ambassadors. The most celebrated among them were President Wilson (USA), Lloyd George (Britain), George Clemenceau (France), Orlando (Italy), Venizelos (Greece), Marquis Saionji (Japan) and Generals Botha and Smuts. There were few princes from India and Arabia attending the Conference. The defeated nations were not invited till the victorious Allies came to an understanding on how to deal with them and the terms to be offered. Protracted negotiations and diplomatic activities continued before a broad understanding could be reached by the representatives of 32 nations. Unfortunately, the Peace Programme envisaged by President Wilson of the USA on the basis of his famous 14 points came to be diluted to a considerable extent. The demands of France and Italy could not be met. Similarly, the demands of minor powers could not be considered without inviting further complications. In the end the big powers (France, Britain, USA and Italy) arrived at a consensus, drafted the Treaty of Versailles and submitted it to the admitted German delegates. The German delegates protested since the treaty was not based on the fourteen points of President Wilson—an understanding on the basis of which they laid down their arms on November 18, 1918. However, their protests were of no avail, and in Germany there were demonstrations and protests against this treaty. In the end the German Constituent Assembly at Weimar voted to accept the treaty on June 23 amidst persistent pressure brought upon it by the Allies. The Allies even threatened that if it was not accepted, war would commence. Germany was left with no alternative other than signing the treaty on June 28 in the famous Hall of Mirrors (Versailles), the same place where Bismarck proclaimed the birth of the German empire by crowning Prussian King William I in 1871.

**The Treaty of Versailles / June 28 1919**

#### THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES (JUNE 28, 1919)

Germany was stripped of large chunks of territories. France got back Alsace and Lorraine. Three small districts of Moresnet, Eupen and Malmedy were given to Belgium. The city of Memel was taken by Lithuania. Poland got Posen and a strip through Western Prussia (called Polish Corridor). Plebiscites were to be held to find out whether the people of Upper Silesia and southern part of East Prussia wished to join Poland. Similarly, a plebiscite was to be held in Schleswig to know whether she would like to join Denmark. Germany's Baltic port of Danzig was converted into a "Free City". The Saar region came under the control of the International Commission for the next 15 years with France exercising her right to mine coal for her benefit. A plebiscite was to be held to decide its future after the stipulated period. Germany lost all her colonies in Africa and Asia, and they were transferred to the mandatories, subject to the supervision of the League of Nations. Japan received the lease of Kiaochow, the control over Shantung (all in China), and the Pacific islands north of the Equator. Similarly, a portion of Samoa went to New Zealand and other Pacific territories lying south of the Equator to Australia. In Africa, Britain got large parts of German territories in south-west Africa and east Africa; Belgium, a small portion; Cameroon and Togoland territories were shared between France and Britain.

As per the terms of the treaty, Germany recognised the independence of Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia and German-Austria. She had to give consent to the invalidation of the treaties of Brest-litovsk and Bucharest (signed with Russia and Rumania in March 1918) and permit the Allies to make new arrangements regarding the affairs to Eastern Europe.

Germany was asked to disarm, maintain a small army of 100,000 men, and abolish conscription. She was to dismantle her fortifications along the River Rhine, reduce the size of her navy, and open the Kiel canal to all nations. She had to stop producing all war materials.

Germany was compelled to accept her war-guilt and in consequence promised to make good "for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property". She accepted to make an initial payment of five billion dollars, and till its final settlement allowed the

Allied armies to occupy the left bank of the Rhine and the bridgeheads on the right bank of Cologne, Coblenz and Mainz. Thus Germany was bled white territorially, militarily and economically by her conquerors. Of course, the latter promised Germany that they would eventually disarm like her.

### **The Treaty of St. Germain (September 10, 1919)**

The victorious Allies signed separate peace treaties with the wartime confederates of Germany. Austria signed the treaty of St. Germain and thereby recognised the independence of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia and ceded large tracts of territories. She ceded Southern Tyrol, Trieste, Istria and some islands to Italy. She lost Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dalmatian coast and islands to Yugoslavia. She ceded Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia and a part of the lower Austrian province to Czechoslovakia. Galicia was transferred to Poland and the Bukovina to Rumania. Thus her big empire was broken up and territories ceded. Her size shrunk with the result that her population was reduced from 31,000,000 inhabitants to a mere 6,000,000 German-speaking population. But to ensure her separate entity from the German Republic, a clause was inserted in the treaty by which her independence was to be preserved by the League of Nations. Her future union with Germany, if any, could be given effect to only by a unanimous vote in the League's Council.

### **The Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920)**

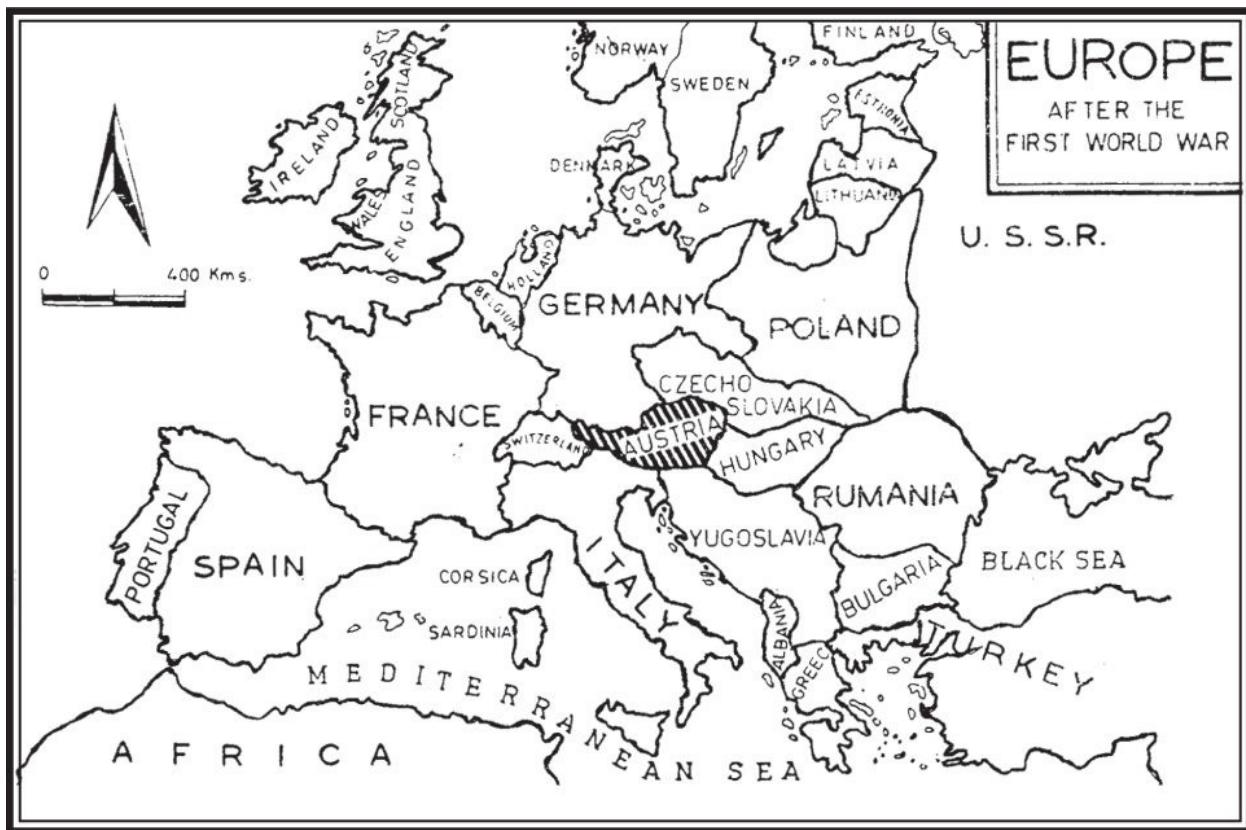
By this treaty, Hungary was stripped of many of her districts and as a result her population was reduced from 21,000,000 to 8,000,000. She ceded Transylvania to Rumania, Croatia to Yugoslavia, the Banat to Rumania and Yugoslavia, and the Slovak districts to Czechoslovakia.

### **The Treaty of Neuilly (Nov. 27, 1919)**

Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Neuilly by which she ceded her Aegean coast to Greece and some strategically important places in west Yugoslavia. The strength of her army was reduced to 33,000 men, and she agreed to pay half a billion dollars as war indemnity to the Allies.

## Treaties of Sevres (Aug. 10, 1920) and Lausanne (July 24, 1923) with Turkey

The fate of the Ottoman empire hung in balance due to the serious differences between the Allies on the one hand and the existence of rival Turkish governments, the Sultan's at Constantinople and Mustafa Kemal's at Ankara. The Allies came to an understanding and imposed the Treaty of Sevres on the Sultan. By this treaty the Sultan would have lost Armenia, Smyrna and Khurdistan; and many other provinces would have been detached from the Turkish empire. However, Mustafa Kemal Pasha who had established a rival government at Ankara was not prepared to ratify this suicidal treaty. Taking advantage of the war-weariness of the Allies, he struck with his forces to dislodge Italian troops from southern Anatolia, and the French from occupied Cilicia. Both France and Italy demanded the revision of the treaty since it was favouring only Britain and Greece. In the meantime Mustapha Kemal Pasha received support from Russia which denounced the Treaty of Sevres. Britain was to lose most if this were to take place, therefore, encouraged an attempt by Greek forces to suppress the Turkish nationalists. In July 1921, a Greek Army under Constantine proceeded from Smyrna to launch offensives against the Turkish nationalists but were disastrously defeated. The Turkish nationalist forces led by Mustapha Kemal drove them out of Smyrna. The nationalist troops occupied the whole of Asia Minor and took the capital, Constantinople. All these events, in effect, invalidated the Treaty of Sevres. The allies concluded a new treaty, the Treaty of Lausanne, in Switzerland with the Nationalist Turkish government in July 1923. Turkey gave up her claims to Hejaz, Palestine, Transjordania, Iraq and Syria. But she retained Anatolia, Cilicia, Adalia, Smyrna, Constantinople, and Eastern Thrace. She gave her consent to the freedom of the Straits. She did not permit foreign control over her internal affairs. As a result of the Treaty of Lausanne Greece lost heavily. She had to surrender Smyrna, Gallipoli and Eastern Thrace to Turkey and also cede the Dodecanese islands to the Italians. She received Christian Greek inhabitants of Asia minor in exchange for her Moslem Turkish residents.



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3. Mowat, C. L. (Ed.,), *New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. XII.
4. Cruttwell, C. R. M., *A History of the Great War*.
5. Langer, W. L., *European Alliances and Alignments*.
6. Ibid, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism (1890-1902)*.

# 20

## The Russian Revolution (1917)

*T*he Russian Revolution of 1917 ranks as the greatest revolution in the history of mankind. The consequences of the revolution were far reaching. It affected at least two continents, Europe and Asia. The revolution brought about an end of an era and the beginning of another in the history of Russia. Russia remained the most backward country in all respects before the advent of the revolution. To a great extent this was so due to the Czarist autocracy prevailing in Russia for several centuries. While Europe came under the influence of the French Revolution during the early nineteenth century, Russia somehow remained unaffected by the course of events.

The Russian Czars were despotic and their government weak and inefficient. The nobles and the church gave support to the Czarist autocracy to derive benefits for themselves. A large number of famines during the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century caused great suffering to the poor peasants. The lot of the serfs was pitiable. With the exception of Alexander I and Alexander II the rest of them were known for their cruelty and oppression. All rights were denied to the Russians, therefore, they had no alternative other than to show their anger through revolts. But the revolts which became frequent were suppressed with great vigour. However the people continued to resist the Czarist tyranny by founding revolutionary organisations. The most prominent being the Nihilists and Anarchists, these organisations carried on underground activities to put an end to zardom.

The educated liberals of the Zemstvos (rural district councils) and students formed revolutionary organisations. They demanded early reforms and hoped to see better days. But their cry for reforms became a

cry in the wilderness. The Czar decided not to yield to their demands and described them as "senseless dreams". It was only when the patience of the liberals began to wear out that they founded the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1898. This party was mainly composed of members who were profoundly influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and others. The Social Democratic Party had many "shades of left-wing opinion". In 1903, a session of this party was held. It witnessed a split on the issue of admission of laymen into its fold. A majority of them (Bolsheviks) led by Lenin were aggressive. They advocated that the party should admit only the most devoted workers. A minority of members (called Mensheviks) insisted that admission should be given to all those who wished to join the party. The two groups—Bolsheviks and Mensheviks—got formally separated in 1911. In the year 1907 the Social Democratic Party held its session wherein Lenin carried out his programme and prepared the Russian workers for the impending revolution. The Russian workers were indoctrinated with Marxist ideas and methods.

## Anti-semitic Policy

As mentioned previously, the Jews were persecuted by Czar Alexander III. This policy was continued with increasing vigour by Czar Nicholas II, partly because of his own antipathy and partly to divert the anger of the people from his failure to follow a successful foreign policy. A majority of the Jews belonged to the affluent section since they were engaged in trade and commerce. The corrupt police got protection money from them, and those who could not pay were subjected to torture. Many of them left the country.

## Foreign Policy Setbacks

Russian imperialism suffered serious setbacks during the early twentieth century. Russia looked forward to the east for expansion. She was tempted by the weakness of China and therefore coveted her territories, particularly the provinces of Manchuria and Korea. It was this ambition on her part that brought her into conflict with a tiny Asiatic country, Japan. The latter also became a great power during the early twentieth

century. Her position and status were recognised by no less a power than Great Britain. Great Britain signed a defence treaty with Japan in 1902 which was aimed at checking the growing expansionism of Russia in the Far East. The bone of contention between these two powers, namely, Russia and Japan, was Port Arthur. Russia, along with France and Germany, denied this port to Japan, even though Japan received it from China after signing the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Now, Russia received this warm water seaport from China on a lease basis. Secondly, Japan was alarmed at the Russian influence in Manchuria and Korea. Therefore, she demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops. After failing to get a satisfactory response, Japan was left with no other choice than to declare war in 1904. The war exposed the utter inefficiency of the Czarist military system. Russia suffered a most humiliating defeat at the hands of the tiny Asiatic country. The people of Russia were angry because their country, though supposedly big and powerful, could not defeat a small country like Japan. They were indignant at the Czar for he was responsible for the failure.

### Russian Revolution of 1905:

As Russia made progress during the course of the industrial revolution, it faced a host of problems at the beginning of the twentieth century. The workers, the peasants and the middle class experienced extremely harsh rule during the tenure of Minister of Interior Vyacheslav Plehve (1902-04). Factory workers, who suffered the most, were denied the right to form trade unions. The demands of the middle class such as the freedoms of speech, press, conscience, and to form representative assembly were all ignored. A few hundred teachers, students, workers and peasants who protested against the tyrannical rule of Czar Nicholas II were sent to Siberia. The ever rising inflation resulted in decline of purchasing power of the people. While the war with Japan was continuing, revolutionary movements in Russia began to gain momentum. Plehve was assassinated when a bomb was hurled at his carriage in July 1904.

Earlier in 1903, Georgy Gapon, a Russian orthodox priest, had set up the Assembly of Russian Workers whose strength grew to more than

9000 members within a year. When four members of this assembly were dismissed by the Putilov Iron Works, Gapon called upon the workers to strike. More than 80,000 workers responded to this call and went on strike in St. Petersburg in December 1904. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Gapon led a procession of thousands of workers to the Winter Palace to submit a petition to the Czar himself on January 22, 1905. The palace guards fired upon the protesters, killing and injuring hundreds of them. This incident, also termed as "Bloody Sunday", triggered a wave of protests and strikes across the country. The strikes also spread to Poland and Finland. Universities and colleges were closed, and the middle class demanded their rights to be recognized. The Czar's uncle Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich was assassinated on February 17, 1905, in Moscow. A series of setbacks, including the loss of Port Arthur, suffered by the Russian armed forces in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) caused deep resentment among the public. The sailors aboard the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied which spread to other naval and army units. This chaotic state of affairs provided an opportunity for the socialists to establish Soviets (Workers' Councils), chief among them being the St. Petersburg Soviet. The role of the Soviet was to organize and sustain strikes. The St Petersburg Soviet gave a call to its members to stop paying taxes. The railroad workers went on strike in October 1905 to make the situation worse.

To deal with this highly explosive situation, Sergei Witte, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, advised the Czar to offer political and economic concessions to the people. The Czar released the "October Manifesto" (October 30, 1905) which promised freedom of speech, press and assembly, and the creation of the Duma (representative assembly), members of which were to be popularly elected. The Duma was to have the power to enact laws, and the government personnel were to be accountable to it. Nicholas II also promised to recognize trade unions and cancel arrears of land payments by the peasants. He appointed Sergei Witte as the new prime minister in November 1905. The radicals among the socialists and other revolutionaries were not satisfied with the manifesto as they demanded a republic rather than a constitutional monarchy. They continued with their rebellion. Soon after the royal troops—who had been loyal to the Czar throughout the

uprising—returned from the Far East, he began his oppressive rule. The general strike of December 1905 was brutally put down by his troops. The crackdown resulted in the death of at least a thousand workers. The remaining agitators finally surrendered, marking the end of the 1905 revolution. During the course of the revolution thousands of people were imprisoned and executed.

The new constitution (Fundamental Laws) was ratified in April 1906, and the First Duma met between May and July of the same year. The Czar went back on many of the promises made in the October Manifesto. He continued to have absolute control over the military, foreign policy, budget, government officials and the Church. He constituted the State Council to act as the upper house of the legislature to check the powers of the Duma which formed the lower house. More than half the members of the State Council were appointed by the Czar. Before any legislation could be passed into a law, it first had to be agreed upon by the two houses before being approved by the Czar. He had the power to dissolve the Duma itself. As the Duma had limited powers it could not usher in much needed reforms like the electoral and land reforms. It was dissolved by him in July for demanding liberal reforms and an end to royal tyranny. The Second Duma met for a few months in 1907 before it too suffered the same fate. The Third Duma survived for five years (1907-1912) because it took birth on a restricted franchise and was amenable to the wishes of the government. The Fourth Duma was summoned in 1912, at a time when the country was heading towards chaos. The third and the fourth Dumas achieved very little as they only had the power to advise rather than legislate. Nicholas II continued to rule the people with a mailed fist driving all revolutionaries underground. Thus, the revolution of 1905 failed.

## Russia and the World War I

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While Germany, Austria and Italy formed the Triple Alliance, Britain and France entered into an understanding called *Entente Cordiale*. By a peculiar logic of circumstances, Russia also entered into a pact with Britain and France which was directed against Germany. The entry of Russia into this pact was caused by the rash behaviour of Germany in

allowing the Reinsurance Treaty to lapse. The German emperor was not keen on friendship with Russia. Thus the Triple Entente was formed. In 1914, Austria attacked Serbia following the murder of her crown prince, Archduke Ferdinand. The war developed into a world war with Russia trying to help Serbia. The Russian entry into the First World War was a crowning act of folly on the part of Czar Nicholas II. The country was hardly prepared to launch such a big war at short notice. The consequences of the war proved disastrous.

## **Abdication of the Czar**

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On the war front the Russians fared very badly. They were defeated in a series of battles. Thousands of ill-equipped and ill-trained Russian soldiers and peasants could not face the German troops on the borders. There were heavy casualties on the Russian side. "Russia paid a fearful price in human life for her incompetence in waging a long modern war." About 1.7 million men perished and five million were wounded at the end of the war. The prices of foodgrains soared and the people were finding it difficult to get the necessities of life. Meanwhile, the war showed its effects on Russia herself. Prince Rasputin, the evil adviser, was killed. A coalition was formed in the Duma which forced the Russian emperor to abdicate the throne. So on March 15, 1917, Czar Nicholas II finally relinquished the throne. A provisional government was formed in Petrograd (St. Petersburg).

## **Menshevik Government**

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In the war, the Russians lost 65,000 square miles of their territory and the Germans captured the Latvian city of Riga. There was no purpose in continuing the fight after such disastrous events. The Mensheviks came to power led by Aleksandr Fyodorovich Kerensky. Kerensky's government introduced liberal reforms such as granting autonomy to Poland and restoring the constitution of Finland. The anti-Jewish laws were revoked. But Kerensky's government was falling short of expectations of the common people and workers. The war was continuing despite serious setbacks.

## Rise of the Bolsheviks

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It was under these circumstances, that the Bolsheviks planned to bring about the downfall of the provisional government. Lenin, who was the leader of the Bolshevik Party, prepared the workers for bringing about another revolution. He had organised, secretly, the establishment of Soviet Councils in towns and cities. He arrived in Russia from Germany in a sealed train. Lenin believed in Marxian methods which included violence and terrorism. It was he who struck a deadly blow to the government led by Kerensky and the latter fled the country. The government was taken over by Lenin himself (October 7, 1917) and subsequently many towns and cities of Russia came under his control. Lenin succeeded because of workers' support who had formed Councils.

### Vladimir Ulyanov (Nikolai Lenin) (1870-1924)

Vladimir Ulyanov (popularly known as Nikolai Lenin) was born in 1870 at Simbirsk on the Volga. He was the son of a school inspector. During his early life Lenin led a happy life. He studied law at the University of Kazan where he was exposed to the writings of Karl Marx. He received a rude shock in his life when his elder brother, whom he admired much, was arrested by the Russian police for plotting to assassinate the Czar. Subsequently, his brother was executed. This incident made a deep impression upon the life of Lenin who turned into a revolutionary. His activities were watched by the Russian police and he was caught and exiled to Siberia. During his imprisonment he spent his time in writing a book on Russian capitalism which attracted the attention of many socialists. Except for a short interval (1905-07), he remained in exile in Switzerland from 1900 to 1917. It was in the year 1916 that he wrote his famous book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

In 1905, there were serious disturbances in Russia, so Lenin returned home and preached Marxism. He became the driving force behind organising Soviet Councils in many towns and cities. Later these Soviet Councils played an important role in the establishment of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in Russia under the leadership of Lenin. Lenin's right hand man was a Jew named Braunstein (Trotsky) and both

returned to Russia in 1917 to lead the November (or rather October according to Russian calendar) revolution. Lenin passed through Germany where he got permission to travel secretly in a sealed train to Russia.

The Western powers were not sympathetic towards Bolsheviks since their government made peace with Germany by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 3, 1918) and surrendered large tracts of territories. This treaty weakened the Western alliance as Russia no longer fought Germany. Thus the whole burden of carrying on the war with Germany fell on Britain. Had not the USA entered the war on the side of Britain, Germany would have been victorious.

## Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Lenin's successful coup established the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, in effect, it brought about the personal dictatorship of Lenin himself. With Trotsky as his foreign minister, Lenin tried to implement the doctrines of Marxian communism. In the holocaust of the bloody revolution, the Czar and his family were executed and the nobles fled the country. The church was deprived of its land and privileges and its officials were killed or banished from the country. The Russian Revolution being violent in character caused shudders among the west European countries and their peoples were reminded of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution of 1789. Therefore, the Western countries supported the counter-revolutionary movement led by Kerensky, Kornilov, Denikin and others, with arms, money and men. However, their efforts failed miserably. Gradually the Western powers reconciled themselves to the fact that the communist government had come to stay. They recognised the communist government led by Lenin. Lenin launched a vigorous drive to extend the Soviet influence to the neighbouring states and established trade and diplomatic ties with all important countries in the world.

He made efforts to build the communist party, established several cadres, and controlled the political and economic institutions of the country. To a great extent the success of Lenin's early economic reforms depended upon the policy of terrorisation. Rebellious elements were uprooted and the party officials forced the people to accept the new policies of the government. Criticism was disallowed and democratic rights were taken away.

## Radical Reforms Fail

The early radical reforms of Lenin met with colossal failure. Partly this was due to mismanagement and partly due to the non-cooperation of millions of peasants. It was expected that the country's economy would be managed well after the redistribution of lands, nationalisation of industries and resources, and efficient distribution of manufactured goods. None of these took place, with the result that both towns and villages suffered from acute shortages of necessities of life. During and after the revolution, imports of all materials coming from the West had stopped. Factories were starved and frequent strikes led to serious shortages of consumer goods. When consumer goods stopped flowing to villages, the villagers stopped supplying their surplus foodgrains. They resorted to hoarding and invited the wrath of the party officials. Agricultural production declined in 1920-21 due to non-import of fertilisers. The country experienced one of the worst famines in its history. Things would have reached a sorry state had it not been for the relief supplies sent by the USA. Compared to 1913 figures, the agricultural and industrial production showed a steep decline (almost by two-thirds) in 1920-21. Russia was on the brink of disaster and the people were on the verge of a revolt. Sailors and soldiers at the naval fortress of Kronstadt mutinied and cries of "Down with the Soviet Government" were heard. Lenin realised the magnitude of his blunder. The Supreme Economic Council did not deliver the goods and made it necessary for Lenin to evolve a new strategy for overcoming the mounting economic problems overwhelming his government.

## The New Economic Programme (NEP)

Lenin's New Economic Programme consisted of a series of reforms aimed at bringing political and economic stability to the country. It went a long way in pacifying various economic sections and interests. In fact, Lenin had to give up some of his original economic and social programmes for the country as he found them to be unrealisable. He had to allow some growth of private enterprise and capitalism to please the Russian peasants although they were an anathema to the doctrines of a

socialist state. He went to the extent of permitting them to sell their products for profit, guaranteed their personal property, and allowed them to employ labour. He allowed private retail trade under certain conditions. Similarly, private capitalists were allowed to open factories which employed less than twenty workers. Foreign investors were allowed to invest their capital in Russian industrial concerns provided they shared their profits with the state. Incentives such as higher wages for improved production were offered to the labourers. Strikes in factories were banned and strict discipline was imposed. A new currency was introduced on the basis of gold standard.

## **Foreign Policy**

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## Counter Revolution Fails

Russia was able to defeat the western-supported anti-communist drive in 1919-20. Admiral Kolchak's forces had to surrender at Omsk in November 1919, and Kolchak was captured and executed at Irkutsk in February 1920. Similarly, General Denikin fled after his forces suffered frequent reverses against the Red Armies. French-supported counter-revolutionaries tried to destroy the communist revolution but failed to achieve the desired results. The French-supported Poles were defeated and Poland signed a peace treaty at Riga with Russia. Again, the Red Army defeated the forces of General Wrangel who retired to Constantinople. Similarly, the Red Army won a victory over the counter-revolutionary forces and put an end to the independence of Ukraine. Thus the Red Army of Russia saved the country from foreign invasions and thereby enabled the Bolsheviks to sit firmly on the saddle.

## The USSR

In a series of treaties signed during 1921-22, the Bolshevik government parted with European territories which originally belonged to the old Russian empire and recognised the independence of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. It formally lodged a protest regarding Rumania's annexation of Bessarabia. The new communist government renounced special privileges and "spheres of influence" enjoyed during the time of the Czarist regime in countries like Turkey, Persia and China.

Certain political changes were brought about in communist Russia. The old empire of Russia was transformed into a federal "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" comprising four states. By 1936 it increased to eleven. A new constitution was adopted in 1918 which recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat. This constitution was amended in 1923 and 1936.

The heavy pressure of work affected Lenin's health. He suffered two strokes and later died in January 1924. The people of Russia created a mausoleum over his remains at the Red Square (Moscow).

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3. Curtiss, J. S., *The Russian Revolution of 1917*.
4. Wolfe, B.D., *Three Who Made a Revolution*.
5. Fisher, Louis, *Lenin*.

## League of Nations (1919-1946)

*T*he outbreak of the Great War in 1914 and its lengthy course awakened the conscience of mankind to the necessity of founding an international organisation for preventing future catastrophes. The birth of such an international machinery was incorporated in the form of a covenant in all the major peace treaties signed in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The founder of this organisation was President Wilson of the United States and it was he who realised the necessity of such an organisation to act as a panacea for all ills that afflict mankind. The last point, in his programme of 14 Points, refers to "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity". It is no exaggeration to say that he "insisted upon its acceptance by the Allies and by Germany as a condition of armistice. . ." He worked hard during the Paris peace negotiations to bring about its birth. The drafting and explanations of its clauses were the outcome of much deliberations which he had with the leading statesmen of the world. The League, when founded in Geneva (Switzerland being a neutral country), embodied a compromise between two extreme opinions. It was to work as a world body with a firm commitment towards maintaining world peace even if it were to mean punishing an erring member.

The tasks set before the League of Nations were: (a) to prevent wars, (b) to maintain peace, (c) to carry out special duties entrusted to it by the peace treaties signed in Paris, and (d) to promote international cooperation.

The obligations of members for upholding the cause of peace are

explicitly stated in the text of the covenant which contains 26 articles. For example, Article 10 urged all members "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence" of one another. Article 11 authorised the League to take suitable action to safeguard the peace of nations. Article 12 mentioned that members should submit their disputes either to arbitration or to enquiry by the Council. Article 13 required the members to accept the award and not to resort to war. Article 15 said that any dispute which could not be settled by arbitration should be submitted to the League's Council. Article 16 tried to prevent a member from going to war with another in disregard to the provisions contained in the Covenant since it would be tantamount to a war with all members of the League. Article 17 referred to a non-member having a dispute with a member of the League of Nations. In such a case the non-member would have to refer the dispute to the League. In case he resorts to war, the provisions of Article 16 would be made applicable to deal with that non-member. Thus Articles 10 to 16 ensured the prevention of war and maintenance of peace. Secret treaties and agreements were forbidden and the others had to be registered with the League. The League was empowered to impose economic sanctions against the aggressor, and armed intervention was not precluded if this failed to achieve the desired objective.

The above articles were designed to ensure the prevention of future wars. Besides this negative role, the other articles mentioned about the positive role the League was to play. Article 23 referred to the promotion of just and humane conditions of labour for men, women and children. The covenant also provided for the creation of Permanent Court of International Justice, and it was therefore duly founded in 1921. Another referred to the need for bringing about a general disarmament among nations. It made members "recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to lowest point consistent with national safety".

The League started functioning from January 1920, and in November shifted its headquarters from Paris to Geneva. At the time of inception, the League was composed of 41 nations, 29 being allied and associated powers. All peace-loving states which expressed their faith in the covenant were found eligible to seek admission. They were admitted

when two-third members of the League declared their approval. The Central Powers were not admitted for some time because they were guilty of causing the Great War. Russia also did not join the League of Nations for a long time. The Senate's refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles in spite of several appeals made by President Wilson caused a great void because the USA could not become a member. Thus the League, from its inception, was deprived of the tremendous support it could have received from that great nation for maintaining peace.

## Organs of the League of Nations

The principal organs through which the League functioned were: (a) The Assembly, (b) a Council and (c) Secretariat. The Assembly consisted of representatives of all member-nations, and each member-nation could send three delegates although having only one vote. The Assembly was called into session once a year, and at times special sessions were held.

The chief functions of the Assembly consisted of approving admission of new members, to select non-permanent members to the Council, to elect judges to sit in the Permanent Court, approving the budget, and discuss any matter affecting the peace of the world.

To begin with, the Council was composed of four permanent members: Britain, France, Italy and Japan, and four non-permanent members. The strength of the non-permanent members increased from time to time. Finally it consisted of 11 members. Subsequently, the strength of the permanent members also increased from four to five (after Germany secured her permanent seat).

The Council members met more frequently than the Assembly. Their important duties were to devise means to protect member-states from external aggression, to inquire into the disputes submitted to it, plan for the general reduction of armaments, and study annual reports submitted to it by the mandatories. Sometimes the Council was called upon to meet threats to world peace effectively. The Council enjoyed executive powers, that it could impose economic sanctions against aggressors.

The League's Secretariat consisted of a Secretary-General and his staff with its headquarters at Geneva. The Secretary-General selected his staff which consisted of many lesser officials drawn from various countries

with the approval of the Council. The first Secretary-General was Sir James Eic Drummond. The Secretariat was divided into seven sections dealing with such matters as mandates, disarmament, health, minorities and so on. The Secretary-General registered and published various treaties signed by member-nations. The Secretariat kept records, maintained correspondence and assisted in the work of other organs. The Secretary General convened the meetings of the Assembly and the Council.

## Other Major Agencies of the League

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### **The Permanent Court of International Justice (or World Court)**

Article 14 of the League Covenant provided for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice, and therefore the League drew up a statute for such a court. The draft for setting up of such a court was passed by the Council and subsequently by the Assembly. To begin with, the Permanent Court was composed of 11 judges. Its headquarter was situated at the Hague (Netherlands).

The judges were chosen by the Council and the Assembly for a nine-year term. Subsequently the strength of the judges was increased to 15. The World Court started functioning from 1921 and it worked throughout the year. It was empowered to "hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it". The Court also gave an advisory opinion whenever it was sought for by the Assembly or the Council. The Permanent Court interpreted international laws and decided on the issues of violation of treaties. The Permanent Court codified international laws.

### **The International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Article 23 provided for the establishment of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It was to be an autonomous body with its seat at Geneva. The ILO consisted of a General Assembly, a Governing Body, and an International Labour Office. The General Assembly was composed of all member-states, each represented by four delegates (one chosen by labour, one by employers and two from government). They

mainly devoted their time to discuss various ills afflicting the labour and suggested methods for improvement. The Governing Body consisted of 32 members and it elected a Director for the International Labour Office. The International Labour Office collected data on labour conditions, published periodicals, and convened meetings. The ILO worked for improving conditions of workers, especially women and children. When the UNO was set up the ILO became one of its specialised agencies.

The League set up other minor agencies to fulfil its obligations. The Mandates Commission effectively supervised the administration of colonial territories (taken from the defeated powers) by mandatory powers. Another agency looked after the resettlement of refugees. Yet another checked epidemics. Similarly, another one combated with issues such as illegal narcotics trade and slavery.

## Achievements of the League of Nations

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In its 20 years of chequered career the League dealt with a large number of political disputes. Many of these were amicably settled. Disputes arising between smaller nations were settled without much difficulty. In 1920, the League settled a dispute between Finland and Sweden over the ownership of Aaland Islands in the Baltic. A special commission of the League investigated the case and settled the dispute in favour of Finland. In 1921, the League secured the withdrawal of Serbian troops from the soil of Albania after a threat. A dispute between Poland and Germany over the boundary line to be drawn in upper Silesia was submitted to the League of Nations. The League's Council brought about a compromise. In 1923, Italy attacked and occupied the Greek island of Corfu in retaliation for the murder of her four subjects on the Greek soil. The Italian government demanded an apology and full reparation charges from the Greek government. The League's Council brought about a settlement. The League also successfully settled the Mosul boundary dispute between Britain and Turkey. A neutral commission investigated the claims of Britain and Turkey on the oil-rich Mosul and submitted its report to the Council. It settled the dispute in favour of Turkey. In 1921, the council looked into the German protests over the handing over of European and Malmedy to Belgium. It upheld Belgium's claim as just. In

1925, the League Council heard a complaint of Bulgaria about the Greek violation of her border. The Council requested Britain and France to investigate and at the same time demanded Greece to withdraw her troops. Greece was further asked to pay a compensation to Bulgaria.

However, the League's intervention in other disputes where the big powers were involved ended in failures. For example, the dispute between Poland and Lithuania over the city of Vilna was settled by Britain, France and Italy outside the League. Even in the Corfu dispute Britain and France mediated and brought about a compromise between Italy and Greece since the former was not prepared to accept the decision of the League.

The smooth operation of the mandate may be described as one of the great achievements of the League. Under Article 22, the League was entrusted with the governance of territories taken from Germany and Turkey. The League appointed Britain and France as mandatory powers to look after the well-being of these peoples till such time they were mature for the granting of independence. In 1920 a Mandatory Commission was appointed to review the progress made by these peoples. The League directly received reports from the peoples concerned. It also received reports from the governments functioning there. On the basis of these reports the Commission recommended to the Council measures to be implemented. After the Second World War the mandate system was absorbed by the UN Trusteeship Council.

The League successfully looked after 30,000,000 members of national minorities living in Central and Eastern Europe. A Minorities Committee was established. The League carried out many other tasks, such as checking the illegal narcotics trade and trafficking in women and children. It did a commendable job in suppressing slavery and bonded labour. Although unsuccessful, the League played a prominent role in bringing about general reduction of armaments.

The Permanent Court handed over 31 decisions and 27 advisory opinions by 1940. The International Labour Organisation was successful in improving the conditions of labour class all over the world, particularly of women and children. The League, for the first time, spread the idea of international cooperation among peoples of the world and tried to make the world a better place to live in.

## Causes of the Failure of the League of Nations

Although the League registered great progress in the early years in achieving its avowed objectives, in the long run, it turned out to be a conspicuously weak machinery to maintain world peace and security. Therefore, an examination of the factors which culminated in the downfall of the League would not be out of place here.

The Covenant which brought about the birth of the League was unfortunately attached to all the major peace treaties. Since the peace treaties were one-sided, that was favouring the victorious Allies, the defeated nations always looked upon the world organisation as a partisan body. Moreover, the defeated nations were not admitted into this body for a considerable time confirming their suspicion about the League being a partisan institution.

Secondly, the abstention of the USA from this body caused an irreparable loss of moral influence. The League was no doubt founded on the efforts made by great messiah of peace, President Wilson of the USA. However, his efforts to make his country an active member of the League failed because the American Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles. The participation of the USA in the League's activities could have stemmed the tide of international lawlessness and could have prevented the outbreak of World War II. Germany joined the League of Nations in 1926 and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) not until 1934. However, in 1933 Germany withdrew from the League, and the USSR was expelled from it in 1939.

Thirdly, the weakness of the League lay in the fact that many members were sovereign countries, and therefore they did not like any interference of the League. Italy, Germany and Japan left the League because they incurred its wrath on account of their aggressions.

Fourthly, it was felt that the League was dominated by big powers like Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Smaller nations had no role to play. On many important issues the big powers could not see eye to eye and thus made the League impotent. The powers failed to support the League, and therefore the League failed to maintain peace.

Fifthly, the League did not have an armed force of its own to deter the

aggressor. It had to depend upon member countries to carry out its will to deter the aggressor. Many a time these members failed to give it adequate support. When Italy was branded as aggressor for her invasion of Abyssinia and the League applied economic sanctions against her, Britain and France tried to whittle it down. Despite the sanction, Italy received oil from these countries.

Sixthly, the big powers used the League to serve their own ends. Britain looked upon the League as a means to perpetuate her pet theory, the maintenance of balance of power in Europe. Similarly, France wanted the League to ensure her security from a possible German aggression.

Seventhly, the League was composed of representatives of member states and not of their peoples. The ruling governments of those states could hardly appreciate the necessity of maintaining world peace and security vis-à-vis the cravings for the same by their peoples.

The rise of dictators in Europe impeded the chances of the League's success. Mussolini of Italy and Adolf Hitler of Germany treated the League with contempt. After committing aggression, they pulled their nations out of the League. Germany held the League responsible for all her miseries. She blamed the League for not bringing about disarmament, therefore, Germany was not obliged to abide by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles any longer. Japan also left the League after invading Manchuria. The dictators exploited the helplessness of the League and brazenly defied international laws. The law of the jungle prevailed which finally plunged the world into another catastrophe.

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## 22

# The Search for Security in Europe

*A*lthough Germany surrendered, signed the Treaty of Versailles, and was disarmed subsequently, France was not satisfied. What if Germany rose like a Frankenstein and struck at her again? France was still weak, with reduced population and meagre resources. But Britain and Italy did not share her anxiety. Therefore the French commander, Marshal Foch advocated that the League of Nations be provided with an international army to enforce the provisions of the peace treaties. Neither President Wilson nor, for that matter, Lloyd George felt there that their countries should sign an agreement with France which would provide security in the event of a repeated attack by Germany. Their good intentions satisfied France and therefore she returned the territories taken from Germany. When the American Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles, there was no further question of providing France with necessary security. Britain also was unable to help France. France's fears aggravated. It was then she felt that she should conclude defence treaties with smaller countries, who like her, entertained fears of German revival. She signed a defence pact with Belgium in 1920, with Poland in 1921, and with Czechoslovakia in 1924. Since Czechoslovakia had reached a defence agreement with Rumania and Yugoslavia, France found it easy to sign a treaty with them. These alliances made Italy suspicious and she signed defence treaties with Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria. She encouraged them to seek a revision of treaties already imposed on them after the Great War.

France took other initiatives. She desired to know how the League's covenant would provide protection to countries from aggression. She demanded the League to define 'aggression' and wanted to know how a

member country attacked by an aggressor would be protected. She demanded that a conference of powers be convened by the League for drafting a treaty of mutual assistance by a commission appointed for that purpose. Accordingly an international commission was appointed, and it submitted its report in 1924 to the League for its ratification. The draft titled "Geneva Protocol" made it binding on all members of the League to settle their disputes with others through arbitration or conciliation, and any country not accepting the "award" be declared as aggressor. Britain refused to sign this protocol. Under the Protocol, other members should jointly take action.

In 1922 Germany was no longer able to meet its financial obligations to the Allies and therefore made a request for a two-year moratorium. While Britain was favourable, France threatened Germany and her troops occupied the Ruhr Valley. But it proved to be shortsighted. In 1924 the Dawes Plan was formulated by which Germany's reparation debts were rearranged. Germany was to resume payments, now cut in half, immediately and she was to receive a large international loan to restore her own economy. As a result of this compromise France agreed to withdraw her troops from the Ruhr.

### Locarno Pact (December 1, 1925)

During the next few years the relations between France and Germany underwent a marked change, from downright hostility to friendship. It was not only due to the successful operation of Dawes Plan, but also the mutual friendship existing between their foreign ministers, Gustav Stresemann and Aristide Briand. Both believed in having direct negotiations, and Britain encouraged this approach. This resulted in the signing of a group of treaties collectively called the Locarno Pact, named after the Swiss health resort, Locarno, where it was signed in 1925. According to the terms of the Locarno Pact, Germany would take its rightful place as a big power in the League of Nations and its Council. In return she would refrain from seeking a revision of the Treaty of Versailles by force of arms. She was to give an assurance that she would settle disputes with others by arbitration or by conciliation. She would recognise the new western borders as permanent but would be given the

right to seek peaceful modification about her eastern frontiers. The most important feature of the pact was that Germany, France and Belgium would respect each other's borders and would not resort to war except in self-defence. Italy and Britain would ensure this provision of the enactment of the treaty. If it was violated by any of the three powers, they would provide military assistance to the affected. Although the extremists in France and Germany condemned this pact, it was nevertheless an important step taken in reducing the international tension, particularly between France (and her allies) and Germany.

### **Kellogg-Briand Pact (August 27, 1928)**

In the wake of the optimism engendered by the signing of the Locarno Pact, Frank Kellogg, then American Secretary of State, at the instance of Aristide Briand proposed to all the nations of the world to take a pledge to "renounce the use of war as an instrument of national policy". Despite some reservations entertained by Briand on the nature of the pact, he gave his approval. The Pact known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in Paris by many nations in 1928. To quote Gathorne Hardy, "As a gesture indicative of a new ethical attitude to war, it is undeniably impressive".

In the course of time, the Locarno and Kellogg-Briand Pacts proved no more than pious intentions on the part of the signatories. France and Germany interpreted the meanings of the agreements in their own way. For example, France thought she had made Germany respect the verdict of the Treaty of Versailles. On the other hand, Germany expected that with the coming into effect of the above pacts the revision of the Treaty of Versailles was possible. She demanded the revocation of those clauses which imposed war-guilt, financial burden, limitations of armaments and the contraction of her eastern borders. But France was adamant and not ready for any revision of Versailles Treaty. She strengthened military alliances with Czechoslovakia and Poland. She prevented Germany from admitting Austria into the Zollverein.

In the meantime, the Dawes Plan ran into serious trouble. Germany demanded that the reparation debts amounting to 32 billion dollars be reduced substantially, and if it is not complied with, Germany may be

compelled to stop payments. While Britain and the USA were sympathetic to this demand, France and her allies were anxious to set things right. The problem was referred to a Second Commission of economists headed by an American financier, Mr Owen Young, in 1929. His committee recommended a revision of the Dawes Plan. One of the main recommendations included was that the amount Germany had to pay was to be reduced by three-fourths (from 32 billion to 8 billion dollars) and payment would have to be made in installments running over a period of 58 years, of course without foreign supervision. The Great Depression of 1929 clinched the whole issue. The creditors of Germany finally demanded a sum of \$700 millions—a very modest figure—in 1932 if inter-Allied debts were reduced correspondingly by the USA. The USA did not agree and the Allies stopped paying her on the excuse that Germany did not pay them. Finally nobody owed anything to anyone.

In 1935 France entered into a defence agreement with Russia which provided for non-aggression and mutual assistance in case of an attack by a third party (obviously Germany) on any one of them. This agreement was to remain in force for a period of five years.

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## Post-War Scenario in Europe

### Post-war Germany

*T*he effects of the Great War were universally felt, particularly in Europe, where the fighting was widespread. After the surrender of Germany the Kaiser fled to the Netherlands. Prince Maximilian opened the negotiations with the Allies for a final peace treaty and at the same time promised many reforms to the people who were on the verge of revolt. There was an overwhelming demand for the termination of the Hohenzollern monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. Prince Maximilian yielded place to Friedrich Ebert, a Socialist, who set up a "Council of People's Commissars" in Berlin. A small group of German Socialists called the Spartacists desired to establish a proletarian dictatorship in Germany as in Russia. However, a number of parties came together to help the Republicans who wished to elect a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for establishing a democratic republic. The Spartacists revolted in Berlin but their revolt was suppressed in 1919. Fresh disorders followed the death of a radical socialist leader, Kurt Eisner, who happened to be the President of Bavaria. But it subsided when the central government handled the situation well. A Constituent Assembly was elected by a secret ballot by all Germans above the age of 20. Socialists, Centrists, and Democrats were elected in large numbers. They ratified the peace treaty with the Allies and drafted a new constitution—the Weimar Constitution. Friedrich Ebert was elected President of the Weimar Republic and another socialist, Scheidermann, was elected chancellor. Thus the Hohenzollern Empire came to an end after a democratic revolution.

## Collapse of the Austrian Empire

The Austro-Hungarian empire collapsed and broke up. The emperor tried in vain to set up the monarchy on federal principles by giving autonomy to all subject nationalities. But the leaders of subject nationalities were adamant. A group of Czech patriots demanded the deposition of Charles of Habsburg as king of Bohemia, and the establishment of the Czechoslovakian Republic.

While the Czechs were revolting in the north, the southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary too overthrew the government and separated the “kingdom of Croatia and Dalmatia” from Hungary. All Slav territories were merged into one unified kingdom—the Yugoslavian kingdom.

The Poles of Austria seceded from Austro-Hungarian empire. They joined the Poles of other states, namely, Germany and Russia, and set up the Polish Republic. The triumph of the Allies and President Wilson's 14 Points and the signing of the Brest-litovsk Treaty enabled the Poles to establish an independent kingdom.

Austria was very much reduced in size and her borders confined to German-populated areas only. Emperor Charles was helped to prevent the inevitable break-up. He abdicated on November 11, 1918. On the next day Austria was declared a Republic by the leaders of various political parties. A democratic constitution on the lines of Weimar of Germany was drafted by a Constituent Assembly whose members were elected on the basis of a universal suffrage.

There was a silent revolution in Bulgaria. Monarchy remained despite the abdication and exile of King Ferdinand. Ferdinand's son, Boris III became the ruler but transferred all his powers to a dynamic statesman, Alexander Stambulinsky.

## National Republic of Turkey

One of the most startling results of the war was the rebirth of Turkey. Turkey was declining rapidly during the nineteenth century and was called the “sick man of Europe”. Its dissolution was eagerly awaited by some European powers, notably Russia. The Turkish rebirth was mainly due to the Greek occupation of Smyrna (May 1919) and the humiliating

Treaty of Sevres imposed upon her. The occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks with the support of the warships of Britain, France and the USA roused the ire of the Nationalists, a party led by a dynamic leader, Mustapha Kemal Pasha. He fled Constantinople and set up a rival government at Angora. He rejected the Treaty of Sevres. In course of time he was able to unify the country by deposing Sultan Mohammed VI. The Ottoman empire was converted into the National Republic of Turkey, with its capital at Ankara. This great leader inflicted a crushing defeat upon Greece in Smyrna and occupied it. The new situation compelled the Allies to treat the revived Turkey with great respect. The Allies offered more favourable terms to Turkey under the Treaty of Lausanne to which the Ataturk agreed. Turkey got Constantinople and Eastern Thrace in Europe and Anatolia (with Smyrna) in Asia Minor. However, she was to give up her hold over Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia. After this treaty the Sultan was deposed, and on the debris of the Ottoman empire the modern state of Turkey was built by Mustapha Kemal Pasha. He was proclaimed the first President of Turkish Republic under a new constitution.

The Graeco-Turkish war resulted in a great territorial loss for Greece. She lost Smyrna, Gallipoli and eastern Thrace to Turkey. She lost the Dodecanese Islands to Italy. She had to receive Christian Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor.

## Civil War in Spain and the Rise of General Franco

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The Spanish monarchy witnessed the worst kind of anarchy following unstable governments. The King, Alphonso XIII, tried his best to stem the tide of unrest but was ultimately forced to leave the country in 1931. His government was overthrown, and the Republican majority leader, Alcala Zamora, proclaimed it a Republic. This second Spanish Republic had to go through trials and tribulations between 1931 and 1936 before it was also overthrown. The constituent radical measures hit the Catholic church, landlords, merchants, and the armed forces. The army officers did not like the new government. Then came the government led by Moderate Republicans which tried to cancel most of the radical measures

passed by the new government. Revolts were crushed, but radicals, communists and the communists in Spain formed the "Popular Front". In the 1936 elections, both the moderates as well as the Popular Front members obtained majority, the latter in Parliament. So in 1936 Spain was facing virtual anarchy. A new President was chosen. The new government tried to purge the army dismissing many officers, and one of them, General Franco, was driven into exile. A monarchist leader was killed and this brought about a civil war in 1936. General Franco went to Morocco to become the leader of the rebellious forces. He made himself master of Spanish Morocco. He set up a rebel government in November 1936 and secured the assistance of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, both being anti-communist. The economic and military assistance enabled General Franco to overcome the resistance offered by the Leftist government. General Franco joined the Axis Powers and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. Thus the Civil War in Spain reached mammoth proportions with the interference of European powers. France, Britain and the USA sympathised with the existing Republican government. By March 1939, General Franco was able to inflict crushing defeats upon his enemies and establish control over the whole country. The civil war left a deep scar—thousands dead, wounded and exiled. Bitterness and poverty stared this unfortunate nation in the face. The civil war increased the prestige of Italy and Germany, and Spain joined the Axis powers during World War II. Those powers which had supported the Republican government suffered a setback, particularly Russia. In February 1939, Britain and France took hasty steps to placate the feelings of General Franco by giving full recognition to his government. The other powers too followed suit. But Soviet Union felt bitter since her design to export a revolution as well as to establish a communist government in Spain failed miserably. She was also feeling bitter over the lukewarm support she received from Britain and France. All this resulted in a cleavage. The aftermath of Spanish civil war was Japan's brazen aggression on China in July 1937. Before plunging into war, Japan took advantage of the setback of the Soviet Union in the Spanish civil war, and signed an Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany which was to serve as a shield or to neutralise Soviet influence in the Far East. On her part the Soviet Union encouraged an alliance between rival Chinese nationalist forces and the

communists to stem the tide of Japanese aggression. It was to facilitate accomplishment of this task that she signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Chiang Kai-shek in August 1937.

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## 24

# Fascist Italy

*I*taly followed a policy of neutrality during the first year of the First World War despite her being a member of the Triple Alliance.

However, she changed her stance when the Allies sought her alliance with a promise to hand over two Austrian districts, Trentino and Trieste, after the conclusion of the war. She joined them but later began to repent. She suffered defeats and hardships during the war which made her bitter. The price she was paying through her sacrifices proved to be heavy but she hoped to reap rich rewards after the defeat of the central powers. At the Paris Peace Conference she put forward her claims not only to the Austrian districts, which was conceded, but also to some German colonies in Africa and the port of Fiume. When her extra demands were rejected her delegate walked out of the Conference in a huff. However, after some sober thoughts her delegation returned to Paris to accept the original offer. Nevertheless, Italy showed her disappointment and resentment for having been deceived by the Allies. When their delegation returned to Italy, it was jeered by crowds. The denial of Port Fiume to Italy made poet D'Annunzio to seize it with the help of a band of veterans. The crowds hailed him as a hero but he was forced to give it up for fear of retaliation by the Allies.

The post-war conditions in Italy had turned from bad to worse. Her economy was in shambles. For example, the value of her currency had so much depreciated that people were unable to buy bare necessities of life. Trade and commerce had stagnated and unemployment afflicted the youth. The nation was bedevilled by frequent strikes. Due to so much misery people lost their faith in the working of their democratic government. Poverty and anarchic conditions provided a breeding place

for communism.

Against these odds, the government led by Giolitti (a middle class liberal) was hardly in a position to establish political stability. Furthermore, the government was opposed by a Catholic political party called the Popular Party headed by a Sicilian priest, Luigi Sturzo. Neither the Popular Party nor the Socialists had capacity to form a government because they had no dynamic leaders.

To prevent the forces of anarchy, revolution and communism from taking over the country, an association was formed which consisted mainly of ex-soldiers and patriots. The Association of Combatants, as it was called, was joined by right-thinking and patriotic citizens from various walks of life to infuse new vigour and life among people at large and thereby put the nation back on the rails. This Association was developed into a highly disciplined and action-oriented political party—the Fascist (the full name being *Fascio di Combattimento* meaning 'Union for Combat') by Benito Mussolini, an ex-Socialist.

## Career of Mussolini

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Benito Mussolini was born at Predappio in the Italian province of Forlì-Cesena (region: Emilia Romagna) in 1883. He was the son of a poor blacksmith and his mother worked as a school teacher. After a formal university education in Switzerland he had a chequered career. He started as a teacher, then turned into a socialist, and finally became the editor of a socialist newspaper. His revolutionary activities in Switzerland offended that neutral country, and the government served him with a notice to quit. Mussolini returned to Italy but his activities were watched by the government. He was arrested in 1911 for agitating against the departure of Italian troops for Tripolitania. His speech at the Socialist Congress in 1912 attracted nationwide attention. He became editor of *Avanti*, a newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party. When the Great War broke out in 1914, he advocated Italy's neutrality, but soon he deviated from this stand by urging his country to join the war. His *volt-face* annoyed the party leaders and he was forced to resign. Subsequently, he founded *Il Popolo d' Italia* a newspaper advocating *Italian* intervention in the war. When the war was in full swing, Mussolini joined the Italian

army as a private soldier and fought at the Isonzo front. His army career was cut short because he was wounded. After his recovery he was honourably discharged from the army. He continued to work for his newspaper. As the leader of the Milan Fascio, he convened a meeting of all members of the Association of Combatants where Fascist Party was founded, and *Il Popolo d' Italia* became its mouthpiece.

## Fascist Party

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The main demands of the Fascist Party included a proportional representation, eight-hours per day work, a heavy capital levy and inheritance tax, dissolution of the Senate, nationalisation of certain industries, annexation of Fiume and Dalmatia, establishment of economic councils, and calling for a new National Assembly. The programme was drawn up to entice ex-soldiers into the party. Mussolini declared, "It is we who have the right to succeed this Government, for it was we who pushed the country into the war and led it to victory." The next few years witnessed the rapid rise of the Fascist Party and the Fascists fought the "red menace". It was their fight with the reds coupled with militant nationalism which won the hearts of bourgeoisie class, the ex-soldiers, peasants and workers. All these sections were disgusted with the impotence of the Italian government and the communist takeover of factories. The twin aims of Fascism were to restore the full authority of the government and the advocacy of national syndicalism. Since the communists were divided, the Fascist Party was able to make rapid progress. Its weapons included vigorous propaganda campaigns through patriotic speeches, books, papers and pamphlets to convince the people of the dangers posed by communism and the need for restoration of full authority of the state. The Fascists donned blackshirts and followed the rituals and customs of the Old Romans. The Blackshirts trained even school-children and made them parade with the slogans, "Believe, Obey, and Fight". They used castor oil, clubs and guns to torture their enemies. In 1921, 35 Fascists were elected to the Parliament, and their programme became more radical. Mussolini attacked the communists in many of his editorials which evoked sympathy from the middle-class industrialists and merchants. They liberally contributed funds to his party. The

Blackshirts disturbed the meetings of leftist parties and fought pitched battles with them, despite the presence of the police.

In October 1922, Mussolini, addressing the Grand Fascist Congress at Naples, declared that he would overthrow the parliamentary government and establish a truly national government, and true to his word, he gave the clarion call to his followers "On to Rome". The government treated his threat as a bluff, but when thousands of Blackshirts reached Rome in response to their leader's call, the Italian government was frightened. The army could have been called in but the king, Victor Emmanuel III, refused to have a civil war. The Italian premier resigned and the king invited Mussolini, then in Milan, to come to Rome and form a new government. Mussolini, then 39 years old, became the youngest prime minister to assume office. He hardly expected that his bluff would bring down a government, but that explained the fact of the popularity he enjoyed with the masses.

## Fascist Dictatorship

Mussolini's opponents were waiting for an opportunity to overthrow his government but they were soon disappointed. On assuming office, Mussolini demanded dictatorial powers for about a year to end disorder and violence in the country. Fearing that he would dissolve the Chamber of Deputies in case of non-compliance, its members readily voted to grant his request. Armed with extraordinary powers, Mussolini began to appoint his loyal supporters to key posts in the administration with a view to establish virtual control over the administrative machinery. He then concentrated on establishing his supreme control over the legislative wing of the government. He accomplished this task by getting the Acerbo Election Law passed by Parliament. He told the legislators that "the revolution has its rights" and he would use force, if necessary, to have his way. This law provided that whichever party secured the largest number of votes in the national election was to fill two-thirds of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The remaining seats would be allocated to the other parties on the basis of the proportion of votes they had secured. In the 1924 national elections, the Fascists gained a majority of votes, mostly by adopting terror tactics and thereby occupying two-thirds of seats in

the Chamber of Deputies. The opposition parties were cowed down and some of its leaders were either kidnapped or murdered. The Parliament became a docile body without any power, and the Fascists dominated the national scene. By 1928, there was hardly any opposition worth mentioning. In the 1929 elections, the Blackshirts frightened the voters with dire consequences if they did not vote for the Fascist Party candidates. So the next Parliament was practically dominated by the Fascists. As a next step towards establishing his control, the municipalities in towns and cities were deprived of their local autonomy and Podestàs (local administrators) were appointed to look after them. The press was censored and the papers belonging to the opposition parties were totally suppressed. Mussolini became the supreme commander of all the armed forces, and for all his actions he was responsible to the king only. He came to be popularly known as *Il Duce* (the leader). He administered the country with the assistance of a Grand Council whose members were all members of the Fascist Party. They occupied ministerial posts, drafted legislations, and discussed national and international issues. Subsequently, the legislature played second fiddle to the Grand Council. All educational institutions were brought under the state control. The textbooks prescribed contained the glorification of the state and advocated unflinching loyalty to the *Il Duce*. Fascist teachers and professors dominated all educational institutions. The Chamber of Deputies voted for its own dissolution in 1938. Death penalty, which had been abolished earlier, was revived to deal with the traitors. A Secret Police Force came into being under the direct control of the Fascist dictator. Thus in all respects Italy became a totalitarian state.

## **Benefits of Fascist Rule in Italy**

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The Fascist rule in Italy brought about a total transformation in political, economic and social life of the country. The first achievement was the maintenance of law and order. Large scale violence and strikes which bedevilled the country was stopped. Fascism advocated six doctrines, namely, totalitarianism, nationalism, idealism, authoritarianism, romanticism, and militarism, which should regulate the life of the people. These doctrines were to counteract the influence of communism.

The second outstanding achievement of Fascist rule under Mussolini was the *Concordat* (formal agreement between the Pope and the State), which solved “the Roman question”. The conflict between the Catholic church and the State, which Mussolini described as a “thorn in the flesh”, began with the annexation of Rome by the ruling dynasty in 1870. All efforts to pacify the Pope for acquiring this city held by him did not succeed. The relations between the two continued to deteriorate and the Catholics loyal to the Pope were naturally found lacking in their loyalty to the state. Mussolini decided to end this conflict by offering adequate compensation. Similarly, the Pope, Pius XI, was also eager to end the quarrel. After some negotiations, the Pope and the Italian leader signed a treaty – the Lateran Treaty – in 1929 which put an end to the strained relations between the Catholic church and the state. The Lateran treaty consisted of three documents, namely, a political treaty, a Concordat, and a financial settlement. By the first, the Pope recognised the House of Savoy as the legitimate dynasty ruling over the kingdom of Italy, and in return King Victor Emmanuel III recognised the Pope as the ruler of the Vatican City and supreme pontiff of the Catholic church. The state held the person of the Pope sacred and recognised his right to receive and send envoys. The second document – the Concordat – defined the future relations between the kingdom of Italy and the Papacy. Roman Catholic faith was recognised as the sole religion of the state. In concurrence with the government, the Pope could appoint all his officials, and all the institutions of the Church were recognised.

The last agreement was mainly financial in character. A sum of \$39,375,000, was paid in cash and another sum \$ 250,000 carrying 5 per cent interest in the form of bonds was given to the Pope to compensate him for the loss of Rome. After the Lateran treaty, Mussolini declared, “the citizen is Catholic and the Catholic is a citizen”, to which Pope remarked, “God has been restored to Italy and Italy has been restored to God”. Thus “the prisoner of the Vatican” was liberated. The Lateran accord removed a threat to the well-being of a Fascist state.

## Mussolini's Economic Policy

Mussolini firmly dealt with the economic ills facing the country. The

keynote of his economic policy was to bring about self-sufficiency of the State in all aspects. He launched the "Battle of the Wheat" to bring about self-sufficiency in food production. He financed hydroelectric projects and encouraged merchant marine. He introduced high tariffs to discourage imports and at the same time gave incentives to exports. He introduced economy in the administrative machinery of the state by retrenching hundreds of officials who were found to be redundant. He imposed higher dose of taxes on the rich. Strikes and lockouts were banned. These drastic steps brought about sound economy and balanced budgets. A variety of public works including repairing of ancient and historic monuments were undertaken. Marshy lands in the south were reclaimed and combat against malaria was undertaken. Transport and communications in the country were improved.

The next important feature of Fascist administration was the imposition of government control over business and labour. He established a "Corporate State". All trade unions and employers' associations were made a part of it. A law in 1926 recognised 13 confederated syndicates (six of employers, six of employees, and one of intellectuals). By the same law, all strikes and lockouts were prohibited, and all disputes were to be referred to 16 labour courts. Mussolini launched the scheme of National Council of Corporations consisting of representatives of 13 syndicates, representatives of the government, and the *Dopolavoro* (leisure and recreational organisation for workers). The council's aim was to promote production, job facilities and settlement of disputes. Subsequently, this council was divided into seven sections, and each was looking after one particular field of production, such as building construction, mining, textiles and so on. In course of time, each section's responsibilities included fixing of wages, hours of work, settlement of industrial disputes, and regulation of quality and price of the goods. Mussolini became the president of all corporations. Mussolini promulgated a "Charter of Labour", which besides giving guarantees to workers, granted them some benefits such as extrapayment of wages, discharge compensation, and social insurance.

The achievements of Mussolini impressed many. Trains ran on time. There were no strikes and violence. Begging was eradicated. Tourist industry flourished. Education was made compulsory for children. The

Italian lira (currency) became stable currency and banking industry flourished. Airplanes were manufactured indigenously. New cables were laid. However, the worldwide economic depression of 1929 seriously damaged the sound economy built by Mussolini and left millions of people unemployed in Italy. His government was unable to cope with the economic problems. It was in these circumstances that he tried to divert the attention of the people from the pressing problems at home to his adventures in foreign affairs.

## Mussolini's Foreign Policy

The Fascists always dreamt of the glories of the ancient Roman Empire and adopted their customs and rituals to some extent in their daily life. They "glorified war as a symbol of national virility". Mussolini had once written, "Only war carries human energies to the highest level and puts the seal of nobility upon peoples who have the courage to undertake it." The Fascist leaders outlined the necessity of encouraging population growth. Early marriages and large families were encouraged and bachelors were taxed. The purpose of increasing the population was to make Italy a strong country. The Fascist youth organisations imparted military training to all children above the age of six. The Italian army and navy were expanded. Mussolini declared that Italy would soon become a world power and the Mediterranean sea would become an Italian lake (*Mare Nostrum*).

The rapid growth of Italian population alarmed the Fascist leader because food production lagged behind. Therefore he was left with no alternative other than to establish colonies. During the war with Turkey in 1912 Italy had occupied certain Greek islands. In 1919, a convention was signed according to which Italy was to return these islands to Greece. However, Italy refused to do so in view of the secret Treaty of London. Italy looked to Eastern Europe for expansion. She acquired Fiume—the port which was denied to her by the Paris Peace Conference, in 1924. Italy and Yugoslavia quarrelled over the control of the Adriatic. Again Italy had a rift with Greece. When some Italians were murdered on the Greek soil, she retaliated by bombing the Corfu occupation of Ruhr in 1923. Both the nations came closer.

It may be remembered that Italy's invasion of the Black-populated Abyssinia (Ethiopia) ended in disastrous defeat at Adowa in 1896. Mussolini decided to take revenge to efface this blot. On the pretext that Abyssinia had become unfriendly and aggressive, and coveting the territory of the Italian colony of Somaliland, Mussolini got ready to attack her. Britain and France tried to dissuade him but he rejected their attempt to settle the issue. In 1935, the invasion took place, despite the fact that Italy was one of the original members of the League which had signed the covenant and the Pact of Paris by which she had to renounce war. The irony of the situation was that Italy had sponsored the admission of Ethiopia into the League. Thus unprovoked aggression on a member country evoked loud protests following Ethiopia's complaint to the League. France and Britain were forced to apply economic sanctions — a move supported by many nations. France which had been an ally of Italy thought of overcoming her discomfiture by proposing a peace plan which would in effect permit Italy to retain a part of Ethiopia. Such a nefarious plan was exposed and condemned. It led to the resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare. In the meantime Italy annexed the whole country and Emperor Haile Selassie fled. Mussolini was angry with Britain and France, and therefore looked towards Germany for support. He signed a treaty of friendship with Germany in 1936 and Japan too joined this group in 1937.

Mussolini intervened in the Spanish civil war and Italian troops were sent to enable General Franco to come to power. He provoked France by giving heed to the slogan, "Corsica, Tunis and Jibuti". Following Hitler's attack on Czechoslovakia in 1939, he invaded Albania and annexed it to Italy. During the same year the friendship treaty with Germany turned into a military treaty. When Germany defeated most of Europe in 1940, he joined her with the purpose of sharing the spoils.

## Suggested Readings

1. Borgese, G.A., *Goliath: The March of Fascism*.
2. Packard, R. & E., *Balcony Empire*.
3. Schneide, H. W., *Making of Fascist State*.
4. Finer, H., *Mussolini's Italy*.

# 25

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## Dictatorship in the Soviet Union

*T*he death of Lenin in 1924 sparked off rivalry between two great leaders, Stalin and Trotsky. Trotsky held that the Bolshevik

Revolution in Russia was the first of its kind in the long chain of revolutions that were to break out all over the world. His theory was called "Permanent Revolution". The theory envisaged that the Soviet Union should help other countries in this process. In opposition to his theory Stalin put forward his doctrine of "Socialism in a single country". This doctrine implied that the Soviet Union should first reconstruct her own economy and "survive without revolutions in other lands". The ideological conflict between the two intensified during the next few years. By virtue of his hold on the party, and by his skill in manoeuvring at various levels, Stalin was able to drive Trotsky into exile (1929). He eliminated all his followers.

Stalin was the son of a Georgian shoemaker. He joined a seminary to become a priest but was rusticated for his radical views. He worked as an underground revolutionary from 1904 to the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. He was exiled several times for his dangerous activities by the Czarist rulers. In course of time he joined Lenin and subsequently became the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a key post which enabled him to become the most powerful man in Russia next to Lenin only.

The regime of Stalin in Russia accomplished four tasks, namely, (a) personality cult, (b) bureaucratic character of socialism, (c) Five-Year Economic Plans, and (d) the spread of the activities of the Comintern.

In 1928, Stalin became the sole leader by virtue of his influence within the Communist Party and the government machinery. He remained an

undisputed leader from that year till his death in 1953. During this period he brought about a rapid transformation to his country. His amazing success was not only due to his personal dictatorship but also to the implementation of the Five-Year Plans. Stalin did not like the NEP of Lenin because it was a result of a compromise with the *kulaks* (a class of rich farmers). He desired to replace it with his programme of Five-Year Plans to bring about a rapid rise in the standard of living of Soviet citizens. To achieve success he did not like any deviation from the set path or criticism. Therefore he eliminated all his opponents by getting them killed or sending them to concentration camps. No political party other than Communist Party existed and all members were subject to strict party discipline.

The Five-Year Plan was put into operation for the period 1928-32. The First Plan laid emphasis on heavy industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture. The plan resulted in the increase of the production of coal from 42 million tons to 77 million tons. The production of pig-iron increased by 100 per cent, and petroleum production rose from 88 million barrels to 150 million barrels. The production of electricity trebled and the country came to have new furnaces, machine shops and automobile plants. Considerable progress was achieved in the mechanisation of agriculture.

During the Second Five-Year Plan there was remarkable progress in the output of coal, steel, iron, power and plants.

The Third Five-Year Plan was geared to meet the requirements of war. In spite of remarkable progress, it appeared that the classless society and equality could not be achieved. As a matter of fact the people who enjoyed all comforts were the government officials, party members and army officials. Production of consumer goods was not encouraged and the cry of equality was denounced by Stalin as a "petty bourgeois ideal".

True to the tenets of Karl Marx, religion was considered as an "opiate for the people". The church was separated and its property confiscated. Religious preachings were forbidden. Communism itself was trying to usurp the place of religion. In the field of education nearly 33,000,000 children were studying in schools and a million in higher institutions by the year 1938. In 1939, it was declared that 81 per cent of Russian population had become literate.

The spread of communism became the last task of Communist Russia. For achieving this task, an international gathering of communists was held in Moscow in March 1919. It got the support of the Bolshevik government and considered itself as the Third Comintern. It drew up a plan and elected Gregory Zenoviev as its President. This Comintern spread its activities to many countries and directed its efforts to disturb the capitalist countries of the West by organising workers and their union. From 1918 to 1921 Russia tried to export the idea of a proletarian revolution by organising a "crusade against capitalism and imperialism". But from 1921 the communist propaganda in Western countries was reduced to a great extent for Russia required help from the West in the field of science and technology.

The USA had not recognised the new communist government till 1933. It was during that year that Moscow felt it needed the help of USA since her interests with Japan were clashing in Mongolia and Manchuria. At the invitation of President Roosevelt, Moscow's envoy, Litvinov, held talks and established diplomatic relations with the USA in November 1933.

During the last years of the twenties, the Soviet Union established good relations with small neighbours, sent representatives to the preparatory disarmament meetings, and finally participated in the disarmament conference of 1932. Her active participation in peace efforts was appreciated and she was admitted to the League of Nations. She secured a permanent seat in the League's Council in 1934. While Germany under Hitler rearmed herself, she felt it necessary to sign a pact with France in 1935. During the Spanish civil war the Soviet Union sided with the leftist government of Spain as against Italo-German support to General Franco to destabilise it. Stalin was angry with Britain, France and Italy because they did not consult him while signing the Munich Pact (1938) with Germany. It probably marked a turning point because the Soviet Union signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler on the eve of World War II.

## Suggested Readings

1. Ulam, Adam B., *Stalin: The Man and His Era*.
2. Deutscher, Isaac, *Stalin: A Political Biography*.
3. Brezinski, Z. K., *The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism*.
4. Moore (Jr.), Barrington, *Soviet Politics: The Dilemma of Power*.

# 26

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## World War II (1939-45)

*I*t was an irony of fate that Germany, a nation mortified after the great war, rose as it were from the ashes, to strike at her erstwhile tormentors within a short span of 20 years. By any standard her revival was remarkable. It would be interesting to study how it plunged the world into another great catastrophe under the leadership of Nazi dictator, Adolph Hitler. As explained in a previous chapter, the Treaty of Versailles (June 28, 1919) imposed very harsh and humiliating conditions upon Germany. It was a festering wound that the Germans had to suffer. It was not a matter of their choice but an imposed one. It may be recalled that she could not even protest. When President Wilson proposed his peace terms, Germany believed that the peace treaty she would be signing would be based on those terms. However, after much discussion at the Paris Peace Conference, the allies drafted a new one which did not match with the spirit underlying Wilsonian terms. The allies threatened that if Germany did not accept it within a specified time, the war would be resumed. Under such hopeless conditions, the German delegates had to reluctantly sign the Treaty of Versailles. She was practically stripped of everything she had, *i.e.* loss of colonies and one-tenth of her territory and acceptance of military restrictions. The Allies promised that they would disarm after Germany paid the full reparation amount (132 billion marks or \$31.4 billion) to them, even if she had to borrow from her friendly countries. Therefore Germany was not in a position to meet some impossible propositions or commitments thrust forcibly on her. She was only waiting for an early opportunity to revoke the treaty.

### The Weimar Government

Another factor which caused much distress to the Germans in general was that they were burdened with a democratic government set-up by the Allies (called Weimar government) which was hardly in a position to steer the nation clear from the perilous path of anarchy. The new government was unable to cope with the pressing problems such as unemployment, food-shortage, and inflation. Corruption and inefficiency of the government was appalling. In 1923, Germany faced a runaway inflation which caused miseries to her people. It looked as though communism with all its attendant evils was preferable. The Great Depression of 1929 totally effaced whatever she had gained during the brief period of prosperity (1924-29). The Germans lost their faith in democracy and looked forward to a saviour who would solve their problems. The post-war conditions in Europe definitely favoured the rise of dictatorship.

## **Rise of Dictatorship**

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Thus the war-torn countries became a breeding ground for the rise of dictatorship. In Italy, Mussolini came to power with promises to set things right. In Russia, Joseph Stalin launched five-year plans committing his subjects to achieve rapid strides of progress at the cost of their personal liberties. Out of the civil war in Spain emerged another dictator, General Franco. Similarly Portugal embraced a dictator. In the Far East, the military leaders of Japan foisted the dictatorship of the Japanese emperor upon the nation. The political scenario in Europe thus was fast changing with the emergence of ambitious dictators. It is no wonder that the Germans too awaited the emergence of a dictator for taking the country out of the woods.

## **League's Failures**

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Had the League of Nations done its duty well, there would have been, in all probability, no outbreak of war. The League failed to come up to the expectations of the peoples of the world. Having no coordinated support from the big powers on crucial issues facing it, the League's credibility as an international machinery for maintaining peace and security began to wane. Italy, Japan and subsequently Germany defied the League by

taking to the path of aggression. The League failed to achieve the much-desired disarmament due to the intransigence of big powers. Since the League took its birth from the much maligned Treaty of Versailles, it became a prime suspect in the eyes of the world. It was also a fact that since its inception it was dominated by imperialist powers.

The League's effort to check the armament race failed. It was only in the Washington Conference that a broad agreement was reached by all important naval powers regarding the parity of naval strength to be maintained. However, as time passed none of the big powers realised the dangers of this mad race. Not to be left behind, Germany too started secretly manufacturing weapons and built what is known as "pocket battleships." By a 1935 treaty, Britain permitted Germany to increase the strength of her navy. It was a typical case of guilty conscience, since at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles they had promised Germany that they would eventually disarm themselves. They had obviously not kept the promise.

## **Disarmament Conference Fails**

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The failure of the disarmament conference in 1932 left Germany with no alternative other than rearming herself. The betrayal of the Allies became apparent. It gave Adolf Hitler an excuse to defy the Treaty of Versailles.

## **Anglo-French Policy of Appeasement**

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One of the key factors which gave rise to subsequent German imperialism was the policy of appeasement followed by Britain and France. While Hitler was violating the Treaty of Versailles, clause by clause, none of these powers had the temerity to deal adequately with the situations created by him. A joint armed intervention on their part would have been a sufficient deterrent. But their pusillanimity was conspicuous. Hitler's acts of aggression, namely, the invasion and annexation of Austria, Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia, remained unchecked despite the signing of the Munich Pact.

## **The Rise of Nazi Germany under Hitler**

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Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, at Braunau am Inn in Upper Austria. He belonged to a peasant family and his father was a customs official. After going through terrible hardships in his early life, he finally chose the profession of an artist. He could not secure admission to the Imperial Academy but eked out his living by becoming a house decorator. It was during his leisure time that he began to devote attention to the problems facing Austria and Germany. He developed hatred towards the Jews for they controlled the levers of national economy. He went to Munich in 1912, and when the war broke out in 1914 he joined the Bavarian army. He was wounded in the war, and for his bravery received an Iron Cross. The defeat of Germany and her subsequent revolution caused great bitterness while he remained unemployed. In 1923, he participated in a *coup* led by Ludendorff which failed. He was arrested and sentenced to five years imprisonment. He was released within a year. During his prison days he wrote his memories, *Mein Kampf* (first published in 1925). In this book Hitler revealed the working of his mind. It contained his deep-rooted prejudices on many issues, plans for expanding the German empire (*Lebensraum*), enlightened dictatorship, and hatred towards Jews and Germany's tormentors. After his release from prison, Hitler revived the National Socialist German Worker's Party with "Twenty-Five Points" programme. In course of time, this party was converted into National Socialist Party (Nazi Party) with the Swastika emblem. He raised a body of storm troopers who disturbed the meetings of other political parties. The Nazi Party increased its strength from 7 members in 1919 to 27,117 in 1925, and subsequently to 176,426 in 1929. In the 1924 general elections it secured 32 seats, and in 1932 won 230 seats. It became the single largest party in the Reichstag (German Parliament).

## Hitler's Rise to Power

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The Nazi Party's spectacular victory at the polls was due to Hitler's spell-binding oratory which played upon the deep discontent of the people to the prevailing situation in Germany. He promised food, employment to millions of unemployed, to fight inflation, and *lebensraum* (living space). His tirades against the Jews, Germany's foreign oppressors, and the

vindictive Treaty of Versailles secured millions of votes for the Nazi Party. He warned the Germans about the growing threat posed by communists and urged the banning of their newspapers. In January 1933, President Hindenburg invited Hitler to act as the chancellor although the Nazi Party had no clear majority in the Reichstag. Hitler exercised his powers to crush all the opposition parties. On the eve of March elections (1933), Hitler stage-managed the burning of the Reichstag building and accused the communists for this carnage, saying that they had no faith in democracy. The so-called betrayal of the communists had its impact on the polls. The Nazi Party won the election hands down and communists were arrested and killed. When Hindenburg died in 1934 Hitler took over the charge of the presidency also with the self-styled title, *Führer* (leader). Even before the death of Hindenburg, Hitler assumed dictatorial powers through Enabling Act. With Hitler becoming Führer in 1934, the Weimar Republic died a natural death, a fact confirmed subsequently by a plebiscite held in August 1934. Sensing danger to his position coming from his own group, Hitler ordered a bloody purge in his party. Hitler's secret police, the *Gestapo*, apprehended all enemies and eliminated them. Hitler appointed Dr Joseph Goebbels as his propaganda minister who effectively used the media (radio and the press) to develop the personality cult of Hitler. The educational system was used to create Nazi mentality and absolute loyalty to the Führer. The Nazis struck terror into the hearts of those who were not loyal to Hitler. People were made to understand that "To serve Hitler is to serve Germany, to serve Germany is to serve God". Many intellectuals and scientists who could not tolerate the situation fled the country. The Nazis took effective steps to eliminate the Jews. The Nazis preached the superiority of the German race and therefore the Jews had no place in Germany.

## **Germany's Rearmament**

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The Third Reich was well on its way towards making remarkable progress under the leadership of Adolph Hitler. Millions of Germans were recruited into the armed forces. He created a self-sufficient and balanced economy. Imports showed a marked decline and exports registered a rise. The tariffs increased and shipping lines were

reorganised. Germany began to manufacture almost everything. From 1936 onwards Germany moved on to a war economy and all the national resources were utilised to improve the country's defence. It was after building a militarily strong Germany that Hitler planned for the world conquest.

## Germany's Withdrawal from The League

He launched a fusillade of verbal attack on the Allies for their betrayal (i.e. not disarming themselves as promised), while they humbled Germany after the Treaty of Versailles. The German delegate demanded that Germany be treated at par with the other big powers in manufacturing weapons. When this was refused by the Disarmament Conference (Geneva) in 1933, the German delegate withdrew. Similarly Germany also withdrew her delegation from the League of Nations as a protest. Hitler ordered the German army to occupy the Rhineland, and vigorously demanded from the Allies the return of German colonies. At the same time Britain and France were worried not only on Hitler's account, but about the aftermath of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia. Looking at the hostile attitude of France and Britain exhibited towards her attack on Abyssinia, Italy signed a treaty with Nazi Germany in 1936. With Japan joining this group subsequently, the Axis was formed, i.e., Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis (1937). Germany and Italy gave ample support to General Franco to enable him to come to power in Spain.

## Austria Forcibly United

Hitler took the next step of wiping out Austria. He forced the Austrian chancellor to take a Nazi leader into his cabinet despite the 1931 treaty, which stipulated non-interference to be observed by both sides. When internal disturbances were started by Austrian Nazis, who demanded merger of Austria with Germany, the government was unable to contain it. Hitler sent German armies into that unfortunate country and brought about *Anschluss* (union with Germany) in March 1938.

The Nazi dictator turned his attention to the Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) where a large number of Germans were living. He accused the Czech government of oppressing the German minority. The

Czech government immediately replied that it had given all privileges and concessions to the concerned. Hitler was not satisfied and said that he would help the Sudetens. It was at this juncture that Britain and France were very much concerned about German expansion.

## **The Munich Pact**

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To check the growing ambitions of the Nazi leader, the leaders of France, Britain and Italy (Daladier, Chamberlain and Mussolini respectively) signed the Munich Pact (September 30, 1938) with Hitler. The latter was permitted to annex Sudetenland to Germany on the condition that in future he should not covet any more territories. This policy of appeasement exposed the weakness of France and Britain. They were obviously not prepared for another European war or world war. Their weakness emboldened Hitler to conquer Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia in 1939. Hitler forced Lithuania to hand over the port of Memel to Germany. He put pressure on Poland to return the city of Danzig. The whole world was shocked at the bullying tactics of Hitler and his war-mania. Knowing that Hitler would turn his attention to Poland (despite Germany's non-aggression pact with her), Britain and France gave her a guarantee of protection in case of German attack. Having the moral backing of both Britain and France, Poland refused to concede Hitler's demands. Hitler concluded a non-aggression pact with Russia on August 23, 1939 and secured Russia's neutrality. Stalin was angry with Britain and France because Russia was ignored at the Munich Pact. He accused Western democracies for encouraging Germany to attack Russia.

## **Germany's Attack on Poland**

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When Poland refused to concede to the German demands, she was attacked by German troops on September 1, 1939. The attack on Poland drew Britain and France into the vortex (September 3, 1939), thus engulfing the whole world into another long and nightmarish war (1939-1945).

## Course of the World War

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The long and dreary war began with Hitler's blitzkrieg against Poland. She collapsed after three weeks of fighting. Russia took full advantage of the situation of Germany's friendship and her army overran eastern Poland and three Baltic states. Russia attacked Finland for not granting certain strategic territories and forcibly occupied them after defeating her. She was expelled from the League of Nations for this act of aggression. The German Panzer divisions (that is tanks fighting battles) and Luftwaffe (Air Force) came to be feared by every nation. After the conquest of Poland there was lull with French and German armies facing each other without doing anything. After six months of waiting, Hitler struck a swift and deadly blow on Denmark and Sweden. The former surrendered within a few hours, and Southern Norway too came under Nazi control thanks to the betrayal by the traitor, Major Quisling. The Allies were compelled to withdraw after receiving heavy blows from German tanks and Air Force. The fall of Norway and Denmark caused a great handicap to be limited. The Netherlands and Luxembourg were attacked in May 1940 and both were taken by the Nazis. At the end of this month Belgium surrendered to the invading German troops and her king, Leopold, was taken prisoner. The English and French troops who went to the rescue of Belgium were surrounded and pushed into the corner of Flanders. Thus the British expeditionary forces, the French First Army, and the Belgians were trapped. The latter surrendered but the others were evacuated from Dunkirk—a most remarkable feat achieved with the help of the British Royal Navy, Air Force and large numbers of merchant seamen (May 26-June 4, 1940).

## AXIS CONQUESTS IN EUROPE



## France Surrenders

The German army marched towards the French capital after overcoming all obstacles. The scattered French forces could not save their capital and it fell into the hands of the invaders. It was around this time that Mussolini joined the war on the side of Germany by attacking southern France (June 1940). France sued for peace. Hitler received her formal surrender in the old railway carriage at Compiegne with vicarious pleasure—a place where Germans formally surrendered after the First World War. Germany occupied the northern and western parts of France leaving the unoccupied southeastern part to Vichy France – the French government of Marshall Philippe Petain during the period 1940-44. He became a puppet in the hands of the Nazis and refused to fight Germany from the French colonies. Thus the fall of France caused a great void, and Britain was left alone to carry on the fight. But General De Gaulle organised French resistance movement from outside France with the ultimate view of liberating his country.

## Battle of Britain

The British government rejected the German peace offer which meant accepting the *fait accompli* and the Nazi dictator was left with no choice but to invade Britain. One of the epic struggles of the Second World War was the Battle of Britain (August-September, 1940). Like Napoleon, the Nazi dictator made careful planning since the British Channel had to be crossed by German ships, and again this meant that German Air Force (Luftwaffe) had not only to maintain its air superiority to protect her ships, but also penetrate the British air defence system. The Luftwaffe directed by its chief, Hermann Goering, did its utmost but to no avail. The pilots of British Royal Air Force did a splendid job in denting all the German aerial attacks, and by September end, the projected German invasion ended in a fiasco.

Winston Churchill, the war-time Prime Minister of Britain, paid handsome tributes to the R A F pilots saying, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few". Although the immediate invasion of Britain was warded off, Germany continued its 'Night Blitz' against her. British cities and towns suffered heavy damage and many civilians died. Britain retaliated by bombing German industrial areas. It was during this time that the United States supplied war materials on lend-lease basis to Britain in sympathy with her fight against the Axis powers.

## North African Front

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The lightning victories of Germans made Mussolini, the dictator of Italy, jealous and he too attempted to claim similar credit. His troops attacked Greece, but within a few months made a hasty retreat after encountering heroic resistance. The Italians also made an attempt to conquer Libya (in North Africa) but the British troops drove them out. Furthermore, the British troops made advance towards Italian-controlled Ethiopia and other colonies to bring about their liberation.

Between April and June 1941, the German troops made rapid advance into the Balkans and occupied Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, the last one after encountering heroic resistance. The British troops in

Greece beat a hasty retreat and settled in the nearby Crete island. They did not remain long as they were expelled from that island also.

To give substantial support to the Italians, the Germans landed in North Africa. Their combined troops defeated the British and subsequently advanced towards Egypt. Had not Hitler suddenly changed his mind, the offensives launched by combined troops would have carried them far into the heartland of the Middle East. But it was not to be.

## Invasion of Russia

The non-aggression pact signed between Russia and Germany proved to be short-lived. It seemed Stalin did not like the German penetration into the Balkans, and similarly, Hitler, the ring of buffer states created by Russia. The conquest of Yugoslavia by Germany and the quarrel over sharing of the spoils created a serious rift between the two. In June 1941 Hitler attacked Russia by ordering a well-coordinated and massive attack. The Russians suffered heavy casualties, and by November, lost eastern Poland, the Baltic Republics and the western Ukraine. The German troops laid siege to Leningrad and knocked on the doors of the Russian capital, Moscow. It was a matter of life and death for that great nation and her patriotic citizens fought it out. As during the Napoleonic invasion nature came to her rescue. The over-confident Axis troops under Hitler hardly reckoned the advent of Russian winter as a menace. The Russian winter froze the German soldiers, and the ice and snow blocked their advance into the Russian capital. Like the Battle of Britain, the battle for Russia turned out to be a great disaster. Further offensives were postponed. The commonwealth army inflicted crushing defeats on the Italians in East Africa, and subsequently they attacked the Axis forces in North Africa. The British troops took Cyrenaica for the second time.

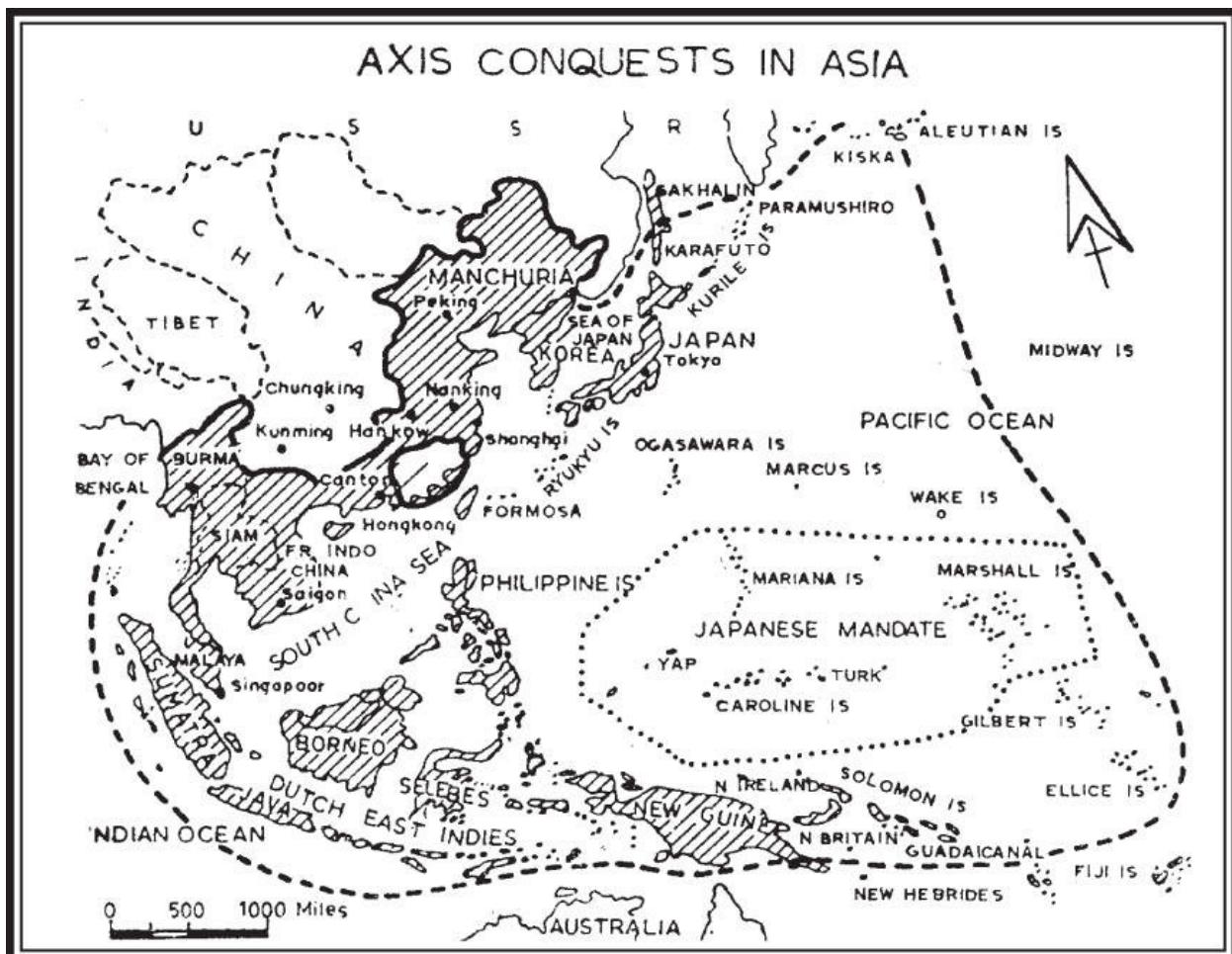
## Japanese Offensives

Japan came under the militaristic rulers who were planning to conquer China and Southeast Asian countries. They conquered Manchuria from China in 1931. Using it as a base they penetrated into China and a full-scale war broke out between the two. With the outbreak of World War II, Japan got an opportunity to expand her empire since the Western democracies were busy fighting the war in Europe and Africa. But fortunately, the USA had been watching her aggressiveness and tried to put a stop to it. The Japanese military leaders under the command of Tojo planned to put the US fleet stationed at Pearl Harbour out of action so that their future conquests could be accomplished easily. They joined hands with Germany and Italy; their Air Force attacked the American fleet stationed at Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. As it was a sudden attack carried out by Japanese planes, eight heavy battleships and several vessels were sunk. American neutrality came to an end after this since the USA declared war on Japan. Britain and France supported the USA by declaring war on Japan and Germany and Italy in support of Japan declared war on the USA. Many South American states declared their support to the USA. Japan's offensives on the small nations of Southeast Asia yielded rich rewards. Hong Kong, Malaya, the Netherlands, East Indies, Burma, the Philippines and a number of islands fell one by one into the hands of Japan (December 1941-May 1942). Japan's successive victories came to a stop when the American fleet won the Battles of Coral Sea and Midway (May-June 1942). But Japan was in control of an empire stretching over three million square miles.

The summer of 1942 witnessed Rommel's (renowned German tank commander) spectacular victories in North Africa, and the Italo-German offensives there were carried on with great success. They were within reach of the Egyptian port of Alexandria. At the same time the Germans reached the Caucasus and posed a serious threat to the Russian oilfields. The Russians under General Zukhov fought to the last man to save their heavily destroyed city. The Russian General brought about the greatest German disaster by surrounding the Germans and forcing their commander, Field Marshal Paulus, to surrender on January 31, 1943. In

the north also the Germans were pushed back from Leningrad.

In yet another front, the Eighth Army under the command of General Montgomery, won a historic battle against Rommel at El Alamein (October-November 1943). It proved to be a turning point in the North African War because the Italians were rounded up and the Germans were chased across Africa. At this time there were Anglo-American landings in French North Africa to force the Germans to retreat. The German struggle in North Africa came to an end on May 1943.



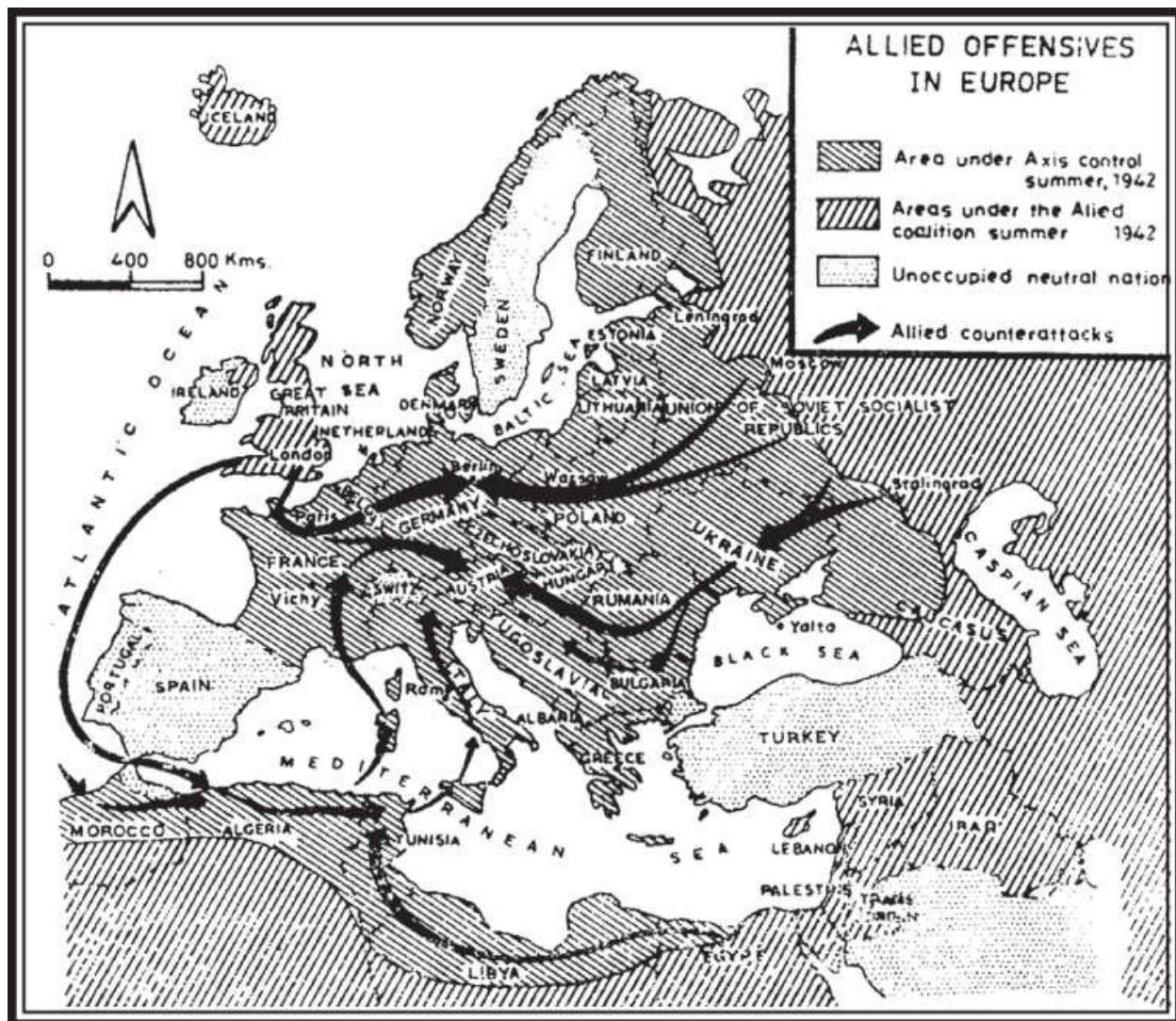
The Allies launched their air and naval attacks by bombarding the Ruhr Valley (German industrial centre) and ports. They were followed up by an Anglo-American invasion of Sicily in July 1943. The Allies gave full support to the resistance movements going on in German-occupied European countries. After capturing the island of Sicily, the Anglo-American invasion was carried on to the Italian mainland. Meanwhile, Mussolini was dismissed and imprisoned. General Badoglio, a confidant

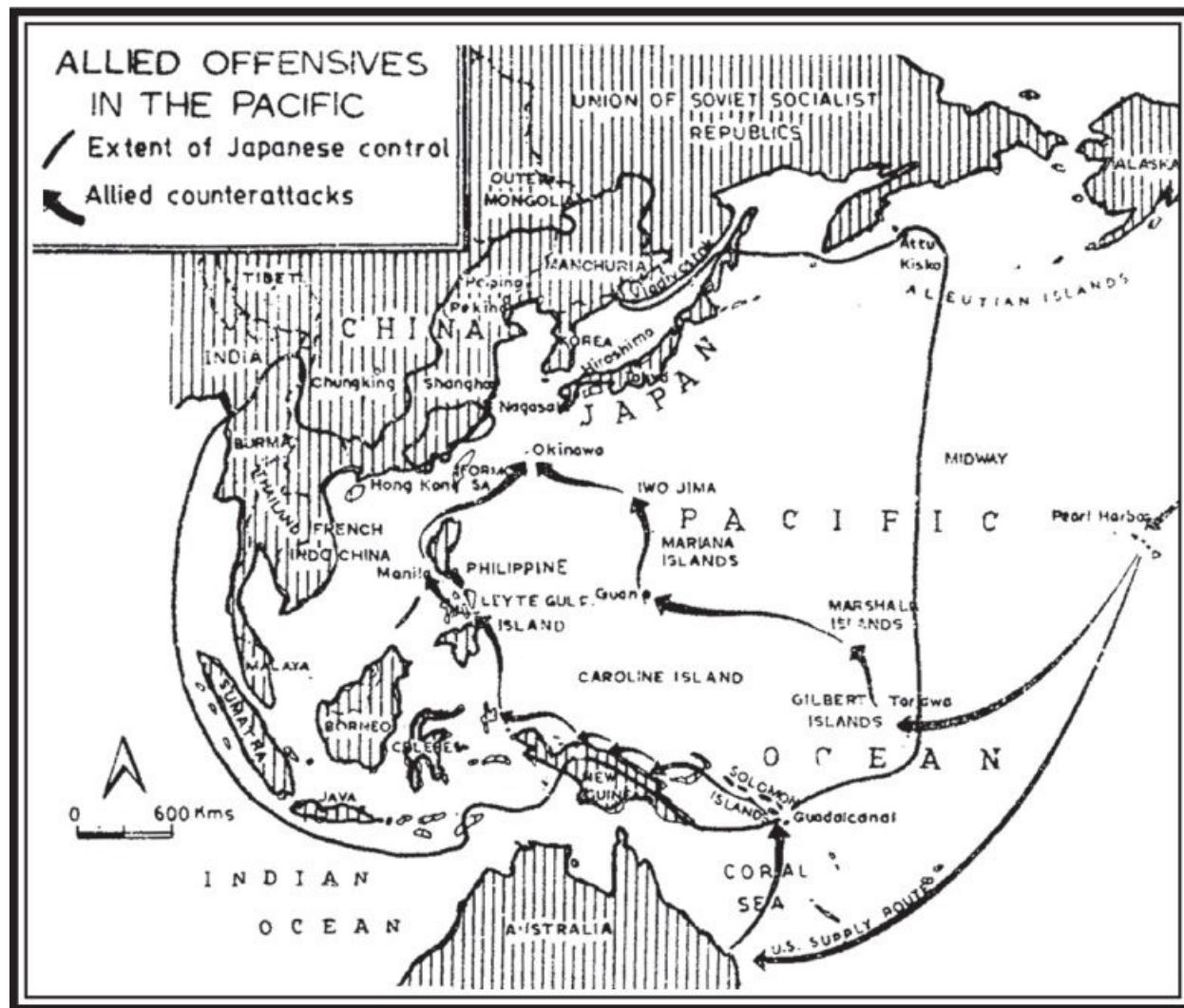
of the Italian royal family, took charge of the Italian government. The new Italian government contacted the Allies secretly for arriving at an amicable settlement. Alliance with Nazi Germany was shaken off. Mussolini was rescued by German parachutists and taken to northern Italy where he set up a rival government. The progress of the Allies on the Italian mainland was halted because of German resistance.

## **Invasion of Normandy**

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One of the most spectacular events of the Second World War was the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, led by an American commander, General Eisenhower. After few weeks of tough struggle with the Germans, the Allies liberated northern and western France. This accomplished, they advanced towards Belgium and Holland. Another Allied force landed in southern France held by Germany and moved towards the Upper Rhine in August 1944. The Allies were moving across the German frontiers. The Germans fought the "Battle of the Bulge", and succeeded in halting the advance of the Allies. But the latter began to penetrate through Germany's weak defences. Simultaneously a Russian army reached the German Capital and heavily bombarded it. Hitler committed suicide. On May 8, the war came to an end after an armistice agreement was signed by Hitler's successor, Admiral Doenitz. Some prominent Nazi leaders died and the others faced trial.





## Hiroshima-Nagasaki Bombed

The Allies concentrated on the defeat of Japan. After the Pearl Harbour setback, the Allies regrouped their forces in Australia, commanded by the American Five-Star General, MacArthur, and took Coral Sea and Midway (May-June 1942). They conquered the Solomons and New Guinea. They went on to conquer many central Pacific islands, and recovered the Philippines. Meanwhile, the Allied armies fought in Burma and captured Rangoon. The Allies next took control of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the two islands located within striking distance of Japan. They started bombing Japan. President Truman who succeeded President F. D. Roosevelt after the latter's death took the most decisive step in ending the war, by dropping atom bombs on Japan. The first atom bomb was

dropped on the port-city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and three days later on Nagasaki, and deaths caused by these two atom bombs compelled the Japanese military rulers to agree to an unconditional surrender demanded by the Allies. In Hiroshima, 80,000 people were killed, and two and a half square-miles of area was totally wiped out. Heavy damage occurred in another 14 square miles. This nuclear holocaust came as a *finale* to the Second World War.

## **Peace Treaties after World War II**

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Regarding the fate of Germany, the Allies had made their aims explicit through the Atlantic Charter, and in Tehran, Yalta and Postsdam conferences. Germany and her capital was to be divided into zones and occupied till such time as she was transformed into peace-loving and democratic country. The Nazi leaders were to be tried for offences and punished. The Franco-German frontier of 1939 was restored. After a plebiscite the Saar was annexed to western Germany. Russia and Western Allies quarrelled over many matters; and many problems concerning the unification of Germany remained unsolved.

A council of foreign ministers prepared drafts of peace treaties to be signed by the five Nazi satellite states, namely, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and Finland (July 1945). The Paris Peace Conference was held in July 1946 which was attended by 21 nations. In February 1947 these satellite countries of Nazi-Germany signed the treaties after pleading their own cases.

- (a) Italy surrendered all her territorial conquests gained after the First World War. Albania became independent and communist. Trieste was divided into two zones occupied by Anglo-American and Yugoslavian forces.
- (b) Austria was separated from Germany and the Four Big Powers occupied it till 1955.
- (c) Hungary and Bulgaria came under communist governments. The latter received south Dobrudja from Rumania.
- (d) Finland ceded some territories to the USSR.
- (e) After receiving the Japanese surrender, the Allies under General

MacArthur occupied her territories until 1951. Japan signed treaties with Britain, France and the USA. She gave up her control over Korea, Formosa, Sakhalin, Kuriles, the Mandated islands, and signed a defence treaty with the USA permitting her forces to remain in Japan and granted bases for joint-defence.

## Results of World War II

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During the five years and ten months war, it was estimated that 12 million soldiers were killed in action. Another 25 million civilians died due to starvation and disease. About 1,60,000 people in Japan died due to dropping of the atom bombs on their cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even today the children of those who survived this holocaust have been suffering from skin diseases. The USA spent nearly 350 billion dollars. The other countries might have spent something like a trillion dollars (i.e., 1,000 billion). In terms of damage, the cost was another trillion dollars. The Second World War caused untold sufferings to millions of people all over the world. Everything was in short supply and prices rose. The issue of resettlement of the homeless became a task of great magnitude.

The people of the world were aghast at the moral degeneration due to the senseless war resulting in enormous civilian casualties. The dropping of two atom bombs on the innocent people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki roused the conscience of humanity. The barbarous attitude of men in power at perpetrating the worst massacres—such as the Nazi massacres of millions of Jews in particular—indicated the depth of their moral degradation.

World War II brought about changes in the status of countries and continents. Britain and France lost their positions of preeminence as superpowers and yielded place to the USA and the USSR. After the war Britain and France were confronted with various domestic and external problems. Both of them could no longer hold their respective colonies. Their economies were in the red and their colonial subjects were demanding independence. Europe lost its status as the citadel of Western civilisation.

The USA became a global power and this was manifest during World

War II. Tapping her vast resources she became a great industrial giant. She emerged from her isolation and saved Western democracies from peril.

One of the startling results of the war was the rise of the USSR as a superpower. She was partly responsible for the defeat of Germany. She joined the Western powers when she was attacked treacherously by Hitler. The heroism shown by her people at the time of war would never be forgotten by posterity.

World War II left tales of misery everywhere. Food shortage, inflation, unemployment and all other legacies of war raised their dragon heads. The people at large were left at the mercy of their corrupt governments. It was in this atmosphere of wretchedness that communism began to thrive. The progress achieved by the Communist Russia dazzled them.

The post-war world witnessed the end of colonialism in Africa and Asia. There, the people struggled for their freedom. The new governments in Western democracies had to finally yield to this demand. The Afro-Asian countries gained independence one by one.

One of the momentous results of the war was the birth of the United Nations Organisation. Although the League failed to deliver goods, mankind did not altogether lose its hopes of making the world a safer and happier place to live in. The UN Charter enshrines the hopes and ideals of mankind on the basis of which countries can work together to maintain lasting peace.

## Suggested Readings

1. Carr, E.H., *The Twenty Years' Crisis*.
2. Haines and Hoffmans, *Origins and Background of the Second World War*.
3. Churchill W., *The Second World War* (six vols.).
4. Dupuy, *World in Arms*.
5. Rauch Basil, *Roosevelt, from Munich to Pearl Harbor, A Study in the Creation of a Foreign Policy*.
6. Pratt Fletcher, *War for the World*.

## Peace Plans of the Allies During the War

The aftermath of the war included the occupation of Germany by the Allied powers for the second time. Even before the conclusion of the war both Britain and USA had stated what their aims were going to be after the defeat of Germany. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and American President F.D. Roosevelt, met somewhere off the coast of Newfoundland in 1941 and prepared a charter—the Atlantic Charter—expressing what they wished to accomplish soon after the conclusion of the war. Many lofty ideals were declared and these inspired the other nations fighting the Axis powers. These two leaders, according to the charter, declared that they seek no territorial gains, will not make territorial changes, bring about the restoration of freedom of nations denied by Germany, provide self-government to the European colonies and so on. The most important object which these two leaders desired to achieve was the establishment of a new international machinery (birth of the UNO) to maintain international peace and security. About Germany, they wished to ensure that she does not repeat her aggressiveness in future. These two leaders met time and again and planned to bring about the defeat of Germany. They felt it necessary to take the cooperation of Marshal Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union. The three leaders met in 1943 at Tehran to prepare military plans for defeating Germany through well-coordinated attacks. They met again at Yalta (Crimea) where three important agreements were reached. The first concerned about the division of Germany and its capital into four occupational zones after her surrender. The second related to the nations

about to be liberated and also those satellite countries of the Axis powers. The third was kept a secret and it related to the compensation Russia was to receive in the Far East for declaring a war against Japan. Russia was to get some islands belonging to Japan and special rights in Manchuria, which she had lost after the Russo-Japanese war (1905)

Soon after Germany's defeat President Truman of America, Prime Minister Clement Attlee of Britain, Chiang Kai-shek of China and Marshal Stalin of Russia met in Potsdam (a suburb of Berlin). The four great leaders drafted plans which gave details regarding what they would like to do with defeated Germany. The details included the Allied occupation of that country, liquidation of her armed forces, dismantling of her war industries, and the eventual transfer of power to a democratically elected government, after the destruction of Nazi Party and its elements. The leaders meeting in Potsdam also planned as to how Japan should be treated after her defeat. They agreed that she should be occupied like Germany, and most of her colonies (acquired by conquest) should be handed back to China and some to Russia.

One of the wartime agreements included the provision for rendering economic assistance to the peoples who would be liberated from Nazi Germany. It took shape in the form of UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) which was to render the much needed aid from 1943 to 1948 to the people of Europe to fight famine and disease. Subsequently, UNRRA provided food, clothing and other assistance to millions of people in various countries helping them to make speedy economic recovery. At Bretton Woods (New Hampshire), an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now known as World Bank) was set up in July 1944. This bank was to render assistance to war-torn countries of Europe to make efforts to improve their economies. America under the stewardship of President Roosevelt realised that it was her absence in the League of Nations that had caused another world war. She, therefore was determined not to let this be repeated. President Roosevelt took the initiative to build a machinery for post-war collective security wherein the USA would play a leading role. Accordingly the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was convened in August 1944 and by October the four big powers (UK, USA, Soviet Union, and China) formulated general principles for a world organisation on the

lines of the earlier League of Nations. It was followed by another big conference convened at San Francisco (April-June 1945).

## Suggested Readings

1. Neumann W. L., *Making the Peace (1941-1945): The Diplomacy of the Wartime Conferences*.
2. Stettinius Jr., E. R., *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference*.
3. Opie Redvers, *The Search for Peace Settlements*.
4. Kennan G. P., *American Diplomacy – 1900-1950*.
5. Feis H., *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin*.

## The United Nations

*T*he adoption of UN declaration of January 1, 1942, by representatives of 26 nations was based on the principle of Atlantic Charter. It was followed by another meeting at Moscow by foreign secretaries of four big powers (USA, UK, USSR, and China) on the necessity of founding an international organisation, the United Nations (UN). Unfortunately, the Western powers did not treat the countries of Asia and Africa on an equal footing because the Atlantic Charter did not take their cognisance. Subsequently, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was held on October 7, 1944, where the USA drew up a plan and placed it before the other big powers. After sometime the plan for founding the UN was presented to all governments for approval. The UN Charter was drafted at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference.

## UN Charter

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Delegates from fifty nations met in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International Organization (April 25, 1945 -June 26, 1945) and drafted the United Nations Charter which was signed by them on June 26, 1945. The United Nations (UN) was born on October 24, 1945, after the Charter was ratified by the five permanent members—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and China—of the Security Council and most of the other signatories. Poland, which did not participate at the San Francisco Conference, was admitted as the fifty-first member on the day the UN came into existence. John D. Rockefeller gifted the land in Manhattan (New York) where a building was raised with 39 storeys for housing the UN. Till it was completed, the UN functioned at Lake Success on the Long Island. The official languages of UN are English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The UN became an association of sovereign nations wedded to the cause of maintaining peace and security, and settlement of disputes through negotiations or arbitrations through the good offices of the UN. Today the UN has 193 member-states on its roster (the last to be admitted was the Republic of South Sudan). All sovereign nations are eligible to apply for admission to the UN membership. They are admitted by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. They have to sign the UN charter.

The UN charter contains 111 articles and includes four clear objectives: (1) to maintain international peace and security, (2) to promote friendly relations among nations on the basis of equal rights and self-determination of people, (3) to achieve international cooperation in solving various problems, and (4) to promote respect for human rights, dignity and freedom. The UN adopted a *Charter of Economic Rights* in December 1974, containing 34 articles. This charter envisages a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

The principal organs of the UN are: (a) General Assembly, (2) the Security Council, (3) The Economic and Social Council, (4) The Trusteeship Council, (5) The Secretariat, and (6) The International Court of Justice.

Besides the above, there are many subsidiary and specialised agencies working under the supervision of the Economic and Social Council, which in turn, is responsible to the General Assembly. Let us examine the function of each organ in detail.

## **General Assembly**

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It is like a world Parliament. It is called into session at the beginning of September every year and each member-nation has one vote. Each country can send five representatives to attend the session. The Assembly is entitled to discuss any topic falling within the scope of the UN Charter. The General Assembly elects members to serve in the other organs, votes for the budget, receives report from other bodies including its special committees. Important issues are decided by a two-thirds majority and others by a simple majority. The General Assembly elects its own president and vice presidents. It is called into special session if any urgent and pressing problem is to be discussed. It recommends solutions. The work of the General Assembly is divided amongst its seven committees and every member-nation is represented by one delegate in these committees. The seven committees are: (1) Political and Security Committees, (2) Economic and Financial Committee, (3) Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, (4) Trusteeship Committee, (5) Administrative and Budgetary Committee, (6) Legal Committee, and (7) Special Political Committee. A General Committee which consists of 25 members, coordinates the activities of the seven committees mentioned above.

## **Security Council**

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Looking at the functions it performs one may describe the Security Council as the executive body of the UN. It consists of five permanent members (UK, France, Russia, USA and People's Republic of China) and 10 non-permanent members. The latter serve this body for a term of two years. Three non-permanent members are chosen each year by the General Assembly. The Security Council, unlike the General Assembly, is in session constantly, and its primary task is to deal with "any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression". It may appeal to the

nations involved in the dispute to settle it through the International Court. It may also investigate the matter and impose its solutions. It is necessary that all the five permanent members concur with four others before a decision could be arrived at. This is so because any permanent member could prevent a decision being arrived at or a resolution being passed by exercising its veto. A veto is thus a negative vote cast by a permanent member to stultify the future course of action which the Security Council is intending to take. Only during the Suez crisis the veto cast proved abortive since the issue was discussed (though not in the Security Council) in the General Assembly. The measures the Security Council may adopt to deter the aggressor include economic sanctions, severing of diplomatic relations and the effective use of armed force by its members. The other functions of the Security Council include recommendations regarding admission of members, appointment of the Secretary-General and the selection of judges to serve at the International Court of Justice.

## The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

The UN is entrusted with the task of creating "conditions of stability and well-being" of member-nations. This objective is to be achieved through promotion of higher standards of living, full employment, cultural and educational developments, and universal respect for human rights and dignity. The Economic and Social Council is composed of 54 member-states elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Six members are elected each year for a term of three years. However, the composition of the Council has undergone some change. Now it consists of 54 members elected for a three-year term. One-third of the members (18) retire annually. They are eligible for re-election.

The Economic and Social Council has to deal with various types of economic and social problems confronting the nations of the world. Therefore it holds conferences to make special study of these problems, reports, and makes recommendations to the General Assembly and member-nations on the course of action to be taken. To carry on its enormous work, the following commissions are appointed: (1) Transport and Communications Commission, (2) Statistical Commission, (3) Social

Commission, (4) Population Commission, (5) Commission on Narcotic Drugs, (6) Commission on Human Rights, (7) Commission on the Status of Women, (8) International Trade Commodity Commission, (9) Economic Commission for Europe, (10) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (originally ESCAFE), (11) Economic Commission for Latin America, and (12) Economic Commission for Africa.

## **The Trusteeship Council**

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This Council takes care of the people living in territories held under the League of Nations mandate or the territories surrendered by the Axis powers coming under trust. It also receives reports on the progress made in the Trust territories under the concerned powers. People in these areas were also permitted to present complaints or petitions.

The Trusteeship Council is composed of big powers (except holding trust territories), member-nations which administer Trust territories, and members elected by the General Assembly. This Council elects a President at the beginning of each session and meets twice a year.

## **The Secretariat**

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The Office of the Secretary-General is called the Secretariat. It is located in the premises of the UN building in New York. The routine work of this august office is divided amongst the nine departments, each headed by an Assistant Secretary.

The Secretary-General of the UN (the present incumbent is Ban Ki-moon, January 1, 2007) is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. The first Secretary-General who served the UN was Trygve Halvdan Lie of Norway from 1946 to 1953. He was succeeded by Dag Hammarskjold of Sweden in 1953. Hammarskjold died in an air crash while dealing with the Congo problem in 1961. Next came U Thant of Burma who worked from 1961 to 1971. Subsequently, Kurt Waldheim of Austria took over the office in December 1971.

The Secretary-General is chief administrator of the UN. Some of the important functions he performs are: (a) carrying out the administrative responsibilities, (b) maintaining records, (c) drafting and publishing

treaties, (d) convening the sessions of the General Assembly and Security Council, (e) preparing agenda for the meetings of several committees, (f) submitting reports to the General Assembly and Security Council, and (g) bringing to the attention of the Security Council any crisis which may threaten international peace and security.

## **The International Court of Justice**

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It is the main judicial organ of the United Nations with its headquarters at the Hague. All members of the UN automatically become the members of the statute of the court after signing the charter. It is composed of 15 eminent judges who are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council after voting independently. The member nations may refer their disputes to the court for settlement. The decision of the court is binding on the parties concerned with the dispute. The Security Council may also refer a legal dispute to the International Court for settlement. Its advisory opinion can be sought by the specialised agencies of the UNO.

## **Specialised Agencies**

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Besides the working of the above main organs, there are 18 specialised agencies at work to promote the economic, social, educational and cultural well-being of the people of the world. Let us therefore examine the work of each one of them.

### **(a) International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

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The International Labour Organisation had been functioning since the early years of the League with its headquarters at Geneva (Switzerland). Its main object is to improve the conditions of the labour all over the world. The International Labour Organisation is composed of representatives of member-nations, employers and workers. It recommends solutions to labour problems and suggests measures for the well-being of workers. It has drafted an international labour code.

### **(b) Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)**

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This organisation took its birth in 1945 and was administered by a

General Conference, a Council and a Director General with its headquarters at Rome. The main tasks carried out by this organisation are: (a) to review food and agricultural situations the world over, (b) to introduce higher standards of nutrition, (c) to conserve natural resources, (d) offer suggestions to countries regarding the improvement of land tenure, and (e) Provide agricultural credit.

### **(c) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**

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This great organisation began functioning from 1945 with Paris as its headquarters. The UNESCO is controlled by a General Conference, and Executive Board consisting of 58 elected members (as of February 2014) and administered by a Director General.

Its main functions are many. It promotes friendly cooperation among member nations through collaboration in the fields of education, science and culture. Its work is highly appreciated by the Third World countries because of its services to the cause of expansion and improvement of education, establishment of training centres for teachers, encouragement given to international scientific institutions by offering scholarships on mutual exchange basis. More than this it tries to preserve historic monuments, folk-art, dance and music from total extinction. Historians of several countries collaborated to bring out the *History of Mankind* which was published under the auspices of UNESCO. It publishes several periodicals to enlighten mankind on the progress achieved in education, science and culture.

### **(d) World Health Organisation (WHO)**

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This organisation was established in 1948 and its main objective is to achieve "highest possible level of health" by all peoples of the world. To fulfil this objective it takes steps to eradicate deadly disease, prevention of epidemics, improvement of nutrition and spread of hygienic habits among peoples. It is no wonder that it has controlled malaria and totally eradicated smallpox. With its headquarters at Geneva, this organisation is controlled by a World Health Assembly, an Executive Board and a

Director General.

### **(e) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD or World Bank)**

It started functioning from 1946. It was initially started to help countries whose economies were severely affected by the world war. In the course of time IBRD (or World Bank) has extended its financial assistance to the developing countries for increasing their production, raising their standards of living, and for securing better balances in international trade. Its soft lending affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA), came into existence in 1960. The underdeveloped countries can obtain loans from this body at nominal rate of interest on long-term basis. The World Bank gives loans to member states for the execution of specific projects like expansion of power projects, transportation, agriculture and communication. Its headquarters is at Washington D C. The International Finance Corporation invests money for improving underdeveloped countries.

### **(f) International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

It was established in 1945 and many nations became members. The most important objective of the IMF is to help member countries to overcome the adverse balance of payment. It brings about international monetary cooperation among member-nations by maintaining exchange-stability, removing exchange restrictions and facilitating world trade. The IMF is managed by a Board of Governors and its headquarters is situated in Washington, DC.

### **(g) The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)**

It was started in 1947 after superseding two earlier agreements on civil aviation. Its main task is to facilitate international aviation by drafting uniform regulations for operation of civil airlines, and implementing rules for maintenance of aircraft by introducing improvements in technical methods and equipment and so on for the safety of passengers.

Its headquarters is located in Montreal (Canada).

#### **(h) The Universal Postal Union (UPU)**

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It was originally founded in 1874 under the name General Postal Union. It became a specialised agency of the UNO in 1948. Its principal task is to facilitate international postal service. The UPU's main body is the Universal Postal Congress which meets once in five years. The UPU's headquarters is situated in Berne (Switzerland). The strength of UPU's membership is 192 (representing 192 nations).

#### **(i) International Telecommunications Union (ITU)**

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It was established in 1932 and at present its membership comprises of 193 member-nations and over 700 private organizations. It allocates radio frequencies and registers its assignments. It makes studies and recommendations and facilitates telecommunication among its member nations.

#### **(j) World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)**

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It was started in 1951 after much discussion by the Directors of the International Meteorological Organisation in 1947 at Washington, DC. Its main task "is to facilitate exchange of weather data, to establish a world wide network of meteorological stations and to encourage research and training in meterology". The WMO's headquarters is in Geneva (Switzerland). As of January 2013, it has 191 nations as its members.

#### **(k) Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO)**

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It was started in 1959 with the purpose of providing a machinery for cooperation between governments in meritng regulations and practices. Furthermore, it seeks to remove discriminatory action by national maritime authorities and also unfair practices by shipping companies. Its headquarters is in London. This organisation is administered by a

Secretary-General with the assistance of a council consisting of 16 members. As of 2013, it has 170 nations as its members.

### **(I) The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**

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In 1947, twenty-three nations concluded the GATT – a collection of multilateral trade agreements – to extend privileges and concessions in trade among themselves by lowering tariffs and removing certain restrictions. Their attempt at establishing a permanent organization called Organization for Trade Cooperation (OTC) for implementing the GATT failed in 1955 as it did not receive the approval of the US Congress. In January 1995, the GATT was replaced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Headquartered at Geneva, the WTO is the world's principal trading body with 160 member-states subscribing to its policies and rules. The main criticism concerning this body is that it favours developed countries and multinational corporations with its agenda of globalisation and liberalisation of world trade.

### **(m) International Development Association (IDA)**

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All members of the World Bank are eligible to become the members of the IDA which was founded in 1960. It is a lending agency of the World Bank. Developing countries of the world which are members of this organisation can avail of the loan facility.

### **(n) International Finance Corporation (IFC)**

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It is a private sector arm of the World Bank which finances private sector investments in developing countries. It procures capital from international financial markets and helps clients in all possible manner, including providing technical assistance, and rendering advice to governments and businesses.

### **(o) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

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In the 1974 World Food Conference, it was decided to establish the IFAD. The IFAD came into existence in 1977 following a pledge by developed nations to a sum of 1,000 million dollars for agricultural development of backward countries.

### **(p) World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**

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The Stockholm Convention of 1967 was signed by 51 nations about setting-up of WIPO which came into being in 1970. It is an organisation dealing with the ownership and rights of inventors and discoverers who have registered with it.

### **(q) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

As of February 2014, 162 countries have become members of the IAEA which is a leading body created to supervise peaceful uses of atomic energy. Its inspectors inspect atomic power-plants and reactors and ensure that these conform international safety standards. One should remember the Chernobyl (Russia) accident, and tragedy that followed it.

### **(r) United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)**

The UNIDO became a specialised agency of the UN in 1985 with its headquarters at Vienna (Austria). It renders advice and recommendations with regards to many aspects of industrial policies by the developing and underdeveloped countries. The organisation consists of 171 member-states.

Besides running the 18 independent specialised agencies under its aegis, the UN is conducting 14 major programmes and funds, some of which are as follows:

#### **1. United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

The UN set up this fund in 1946 for serving poor children after the second World War. In course of time, it started giving assistance to developing countries so as to improve the quality of life for poor children

and mothers.

## **2. United Development Programme (UNDP)**

This body of the UN provides funds, technical assistance and preinvestment cooperation to developing countries and less developed countries.

## **3. UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)**

This organisation was created in response to the rapid rise in the population of developing and underdeveloped countries after the War. Its main purpose is to create awareness on the problems of population explosion, and the need to check it through family planning programme. It renders financial assistance to the countries concerned to achieve population planning with the world population increasing by 80 million each year.

## **4. UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**

The Stockholm Conference in 1972 highlighted the degradation of world's environment and the reasons for it. In response to this challenging problem, the UN set up the UNEP. This programme advocates sustainable development "through sound environmental practices".

Over and above major programmes and funds, the UN created relief agencies for the refugees and victims of man-made and natural disasters. After the creation of the state of Israel and the following war, millions of refugees fled their homeland (Palestine), and the General Assembly of the UN established the office of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in 1951 with its headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland). The UN also appointed a High-Commissioner for Human Rights whose main duty is to raise objections or lodge protests against countries which violate human rights. The UN had intervened effectively in countries where the governments have violated human rights (e.g. Congo, Rwanda etc.).

# **The Achievements of the United Nations**

On the political side the UN had to tackle more than a hundred difficult situations in its career. Some of them were solved through her good offices. One of the serious situations which she had to face boldly was the dispute between Iran and the Soviet Union in 1946. The former accused the latter for interfering in her domestic affairs by continuing to keep her armed forces even after the conclusion of World War II. The UN reminded the Soviet Union of the need to restore normalcy by withdrawing her troops from Iran to which the Soviet Union responded. The Soviet troops were withdrawn.

In January 1946, the Soviet Union complained to the UN of the presence of British troops in Greece which constituted interference in that country's domestic affairs. The UN made enquiries and found that the British troops were there at the request of the Greek government.

In 1946 the United Nations brought about the withdrawal of troops of mandatory powers thus enabling Syria and Jordan to become independent. During the same year she successfully intervened to stop a civil war in Greece inspired by a foreign power and thus saved its independence and sovereignty.

Soon after the Second World War the Japanese left the East Indies which was formerly held by the Dutch. The nationalists there wanted to establish an independent republic under the presidentship of Sukarno. But the Dutch wanted to recover their former colonies. A war of liberation broke out. Therefore, the dispute between Indonesia and the Dutch was referred to the Security Council by India and Australia. The UN effectively intervened and brought about a compromise which included the independence of Indonesia in 1949.

The Balfour Declaration (1917) and the withdrawal of British troops from Palestine (1948) brought about the birth of Israel. It was situated in the midst of Arab states. The Jews expelled the Palestinians from their homeland and the Arab League took up their cause. The members of the Arab league invaded Israel. The UN intervened and arranged for ceasefire (1948-49).

In 1950 the Korean war broke out. When the Japanese left Korea after the Second World War, it was agreed that North Korea was to be controlled by the Soviet Union and South by the USA. Unfortunately, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and attacked South Korea.

South Korea complained to the Security Council. North Korea was branded as aggressors and UN called upon member states to push the aggressors back. The UN troops led by the USA launched offensives against North Korea and the war prolonged for nearly two years (1950-52). Finally a truce was signed in Panmunjon which was followed by an exchange of prisoners of war. South Korea was thus saved from the jaws of communism. In the early 1950s, the UN enabled both Morocco and Tunisia to achieve independence.

The next serious problem faced by the UN was the Suez crisis. President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Anglo-Egyptian owned Suez Canal Company in 1956. Britain and France encouraged Israel to attack Egypt, and subsequently joined her by invading Egypt. The world was on the brink of yet another world war since Khruschev, the Russian leader, threatened Britain and France with war. Fortunately, the USA diffused the situation by appealing to both Britain and France to stop the war. The UN conducted "quiet diplomacy". She resorted peace in the area.

The next important crisis faced by the UN was the Cyprus issue. When the British left the island of Cyprus (situated in the Mediterranean Sea) in 1960, the Greeks and Turks fought for the control of the island. The UN brought about a ceasefire and sent the UN peace-keeping force there to maintain peace.

When the Arab nations closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships, Israel retaliated by attacking them. She defeated the Arabs in what is known as "Six days war" and seized the Gaza strip (1967). The UN intervened to establish ceasefire.

The UN sent its forces in 1960 to contain a civil war raging in Congo (Africa) after the abrupt departure of the Belgians, and its Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, lost his life in an air crash while supervising the whole affair.

India and Pakistan fought over the Kashmir issue in 1965 and the UN had to intervene to bring about a ceasefire. The UN initiated talks among the nuclear powers for the reduction of all types of armaments. In August 1963 the superpowers agreed for a limited nuclear test-ban. In January 1967 it was agreed not to test nuclear arms in space. Subsequently, the superpowers agreed for a nuclear non-proliferation

treaty.

In 1966, the UN imposed economic sanctions on the racist South Rhodesia which had declared her independence from Britain. During the same year, the UN showed its contempt for the South African racist government by terminating its mandate over South-West Africa, and transferring it to a UN committee. In 1967, the UN adopted a resolution asking participants in the Middle-East War to withdraw their forces, and the resolution provided an acceptable basis for settlement. In 1971, the International Court of Justice declared South Africa's presence in Namibia as "illegal", and the People's Republic of China as a lawful member of the UN during the same year. In 1973, the UN peace-keeping force assumed charge of the areas of conflict, namely, the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Four years later, the UN made arms embargo on South Africa as mandatory on all UN members to force that country to end racial discrimination and apartheid. In 1978, the Security Council adopted a plan to bring about the independence of Namibia. During the same year the UN sent a peace-keeping force into the trouble-torn Lebanon. The General Assembly convened a special session to discuss the problem of disarmament. In 1983, the Secretary General of the UN visited South Africa to implement the Security Council's plan for bringing about the independence of Namibia. In July 1987, the UN Security Council passed resolution 598 appealing to Iraq and Iran to end their seven years war. They took a full year to respond to the UN appeal, and after getting totally exhausted, ended their hostilities (July, 1988).

In less than two years, the Gulf region faced another conflict when Iraq's President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The Iraqi troops occupied Kuwait, and Saddam's intention was not only to grab its oil resources but to annex it to Iraq. The sudden invasion and occupation of Kuwait shocked the Gulf states, and they strongly urged him to pull out his troops and settle his quarrel with that country peacefully. When President Saddam Hussein refused to budge, the UN was approached. The US President George Bush, and the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, condemned Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and urged Saddam Hussein to pull out his troops from that country. The UN Secretary General could not persuade the Iraqi president about the danger facing his country if he disrespected the UN Security Council

Resolution. The US Congress gave George Bush the authority to militarily expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait after the deadline set by the Security Council Resolution, i.e., January 15, 1991. In a last minute effort, Gorbachev tried to persuade his ally, the Iraqi president, by sending his personal envoy, Mr Primakov, to comply with the UN resolution. When the deadline passed, the US and its coalition allies (34 nations in all) waged a war codenamed "Operation Desert Storm" (January 17, 1991 – February 28, 1991) with Iraq, and President Saddam Hussein urged his Iraqi forces to fight "the Mother of all Battles." Saddam hoped to win the ground war, since he was unable to do anything from allied aerial bombardment. On February 24, 1991, the ground war began. Iraqi president hardly knew how the allies would win, but the high-tech war at its peak caused such great havoc, that thousands of Iraqi soldiers surrendered without fight. Although Saddam Hussein survived after surrender of his forces, the war had totally destroyed his country. The economic embargo of the UN continued even as its inspection teams searched for Iraq's nuclear armaments.

## Non-political Achievements

Although the record of the UN is not very impressive, as many problems remain unresolved, yet it is the only forum through which all disputes can be settled. Many a time the UN could not effectively intervene because she was not consulted. Sometimes the countries tried to settle the disputes on their own. The superpower rivalry too hampered the UN from effectively functioning; the veto wielding superpowers, at times, prevented the UN Security Council from arriving at amicable solutions on crucial issues.

In the non-political field, the UN has an impressive record to its credit. Many developing countries received ample measure of financial assistance from the World Bank, IDA and IMF. The other specialised agencies of the UN, such as the UNESCO and UNICEF rendered great assistance in improving the quality of life in the Third World countries. However, the population explosion seen specially in the Third World countries, has stultified the efforts of this noble organisation. The affluent countries of the West are now afraid that the UN will be dominated by

the have-nots and therefore have become wary of their commitments to this great world body.

In 1966, the United Nations adopted two major covenants on human rights, the first one covering civil and political rights, and the second, economic, social and cultural rights. Complaints by individuals referring to the first one would be dealt by International Human Rights Committee. In 1969, the UN General Assembly enforced the convention on all forms of racial discrimination adopted by it in 1965. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee awarded the peace prize to the UNICEF for its meritorious services. The General Assembly adopted "the first internationally agreed set of principles on sea-bed and ocean floor zones beyond national jurisdiction", in 1970. The victims of Bangladesh war received massive aid from the UN in 1971. The UN Environment Conference met at Stockholm and introduced new principles governing human activities in order to safeguard the Natural World (1972). The UN University in Tokyo urged the global intellectual community to coordinate and marshal its efforts to deal effectively with global problems facing the world (1973). In 1974 the UN General Assembly called for a New International Economic Order to work for a stable economy in an interdependent world. Mexico City hosted a world conference of International Women's Year where it adopted a declaration on equality of women and their contributions, and suggested a plan of action for the decade (1975).

In trade matters, the UNCTAD adopted an *Integrated Programme* to deal with problems of world trade, and a new UN specialised agency called *International Fund for Agricultural Development* (IFAD), with a billion-dollar capital, started financing food production in developing countries (1977). In 1978, the UN General Assembly adopted a convention on the elimination of discrimination against women covering all their rights.

In 1980, the World Health Organisation could take the credit for having totally eliminated one of the deadliest diseases, smallpox, from the world. During the next year the UN General Assembly adopted a *Declaration on Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*. A UN convened conference prepared an action plan on New and Renewable Sources of Energy. A conference convened

by the General Assembly adopted in 1982, a new international law of the century, i.e., *the law of the sea*, which took nine years to draft. The General Assembly of the UN adopted a *Convention against Torture* in 1984, as proposed by the Commission on Human Rights. The UN helped famine-stricken Africa in 1985 with massive relief aid. In 1986, it organised the earth-run in 110 countries for the sake of world peace.

The UN with meagre funds has been doing its best to help the people of the world. It has exercised its moral authority, and when it failed, used economic sanctions to punish nations violating UN resolutions. There has been a strong feeling that the strength of the Security Council should be increased so as to give representation to some more countries. India hopes to assume the big power status in the Security Council, and her aspiration is legitimate as she has rendered yeoman service for the cause of world peace since her independence.

## The UN's Failures

During the past decade, there has been much debate about the UN being ineffective or redundant. Many critics point out that the UN has become a pawn in the hands of the sole superpower, the United States. It may meet the same fate as the League of Nations. Some of the major failures of the UN are as follows:

- (a) that it has not succeeded in bringing about disarmament and total implementation of nuclear non-proliferation. It has allowed the Big-powers to keep nuclear stockpiles.
- (b) It has failed to resolve the west-Asia crisis, and the role is assumed by the US.
- (c) It has remained helpless when Big-powers were involved in the wars, such as Vietnam, Afghanistan, and West Asia.
- (d) It has remained helpless when human rights were trampled in countries like Myanmar, Afghanistan, China and some African countries.
- (e) It has allowed the sole superpower, the US, to dictate terms and conditions in international organisations like the WTO, the International Criminal Court, and the Kyoto protocol.
- (f) Some say that UN's role is restricted to fire-fighting (i.e. separating

the combatants) and not fire-prevention (i.e. preventing situations likely to cause wars).

The future of the UN largely rests in the hands of the big-powers, since small powers are largely watching the situation with crossed fingers. War against Iraq and its occupation by the US-led coalition caused serious concern to the peace-loving people of the world who had implicit faith in the UN as a peace-keeper.

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4. Vandenbosch and Hogan, *The United Nations*.

## Post-War Era in Europe

*A*lthough World War II was over by 1945 the peace treaties were signed after a considerable lapse of time. The war time agreements could not be immediately translated into peace treaties after the war mainly due to the wrangling among the Allies. There was no final peace treaty about Germany, therefore some minimum understanding was arrived at. The eastern frontier of Germany was demarcated along the Oder and Neisse rivers. Russia received the northern part of East Prussia including Konigsberg. France got Alsace and Lorraine, and Poland received Silesia, eastern Brandenberg, a large part of Pomerania, Danzig, and the southern strip of East Prussia. Belgium received Eupen and Malmedy. Czechoslovakia got back Sudetenland. Austria was partitioned into zones for allied military occupation and the Saar region was handed over to France. Comparatively, Germany's territorial losses were much greater than in the previous war. Germany was totally disarmed and its "war potential" was destroyed, the Germans were "de-Nazified" and the Nazi criminals were put on trial at Nuremberg. In 1946 the court convicted 22 criminals, out of which 11 were summarily executed. Several minor Nazi officials were accused of slaughtering millions of Jews and they were also condemned to death. Similarly, between 1946 and 1948 several Japanese criminals were tried and condemned to death sentence. General Tojo was one among them.

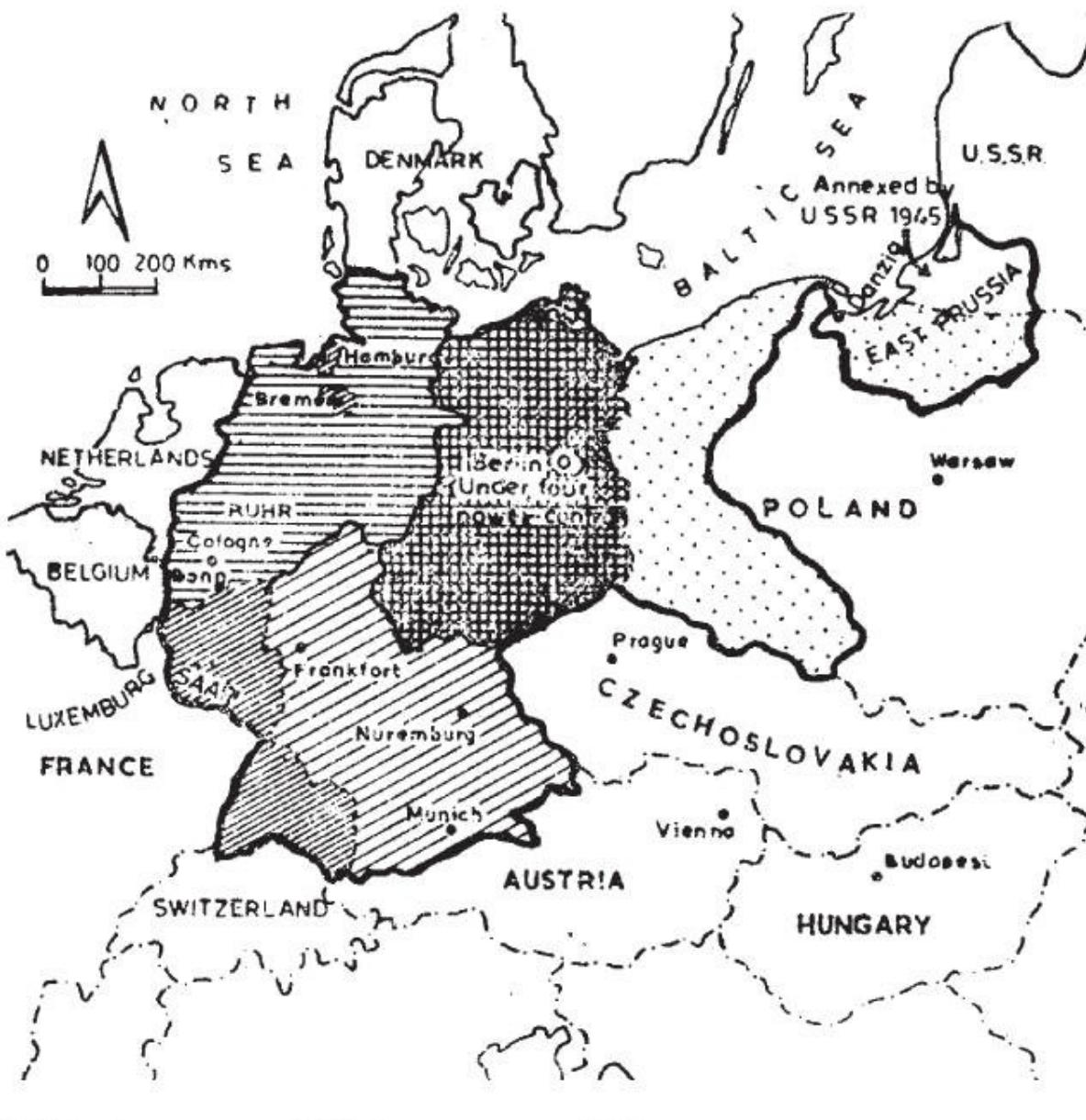
The Allies, after much wrangling, drafted treaties and they were finally signed by Italy and other minor allies of Germany in February 1947. All of them contained provisions for reparations to be paid by Italy and minor allies of Germany to Russia, and limitations of armed forces to be maintained by them. The reparation charges of Italy, Bulgaria,

Hungary, Rumania, and Finland were \$360 million, \$70 million and \$300 million respectively. Italy gave up her claims to Albania and Ethiopia. She ceded Flume, Istria, and some Adriatic islands to Yugoslavia. Greece received Dodecanese Islands, and France some western frontier posts.

Hungary ceded Transylvania to Rumania and some territories to Czechoslovakia. Rumania recognised the annexation of Bessarabia and Bukovina by Russia and southern Dobruja by Bulgaria.

The Soviet Union showed marked favour to Bulgaria and she gained Dobruja. Finland lost the province of Petsamo and most of Karelia to the Soviet Union. She ceded a naval base commanding the Gulf of Finland on a lease basis.

## PARTITION OF GERMANY 1945



■ Soviet zone   ■ French zone   ■ Occupied by Poland  
 ■ American zone   ■ British zone   — German border in 1938  
 - - - Present national boundaries

### Germany

The foreign ministers of major powers discussed the peace treaties with

Germany and Austria at Moscow in the spring of 1947. They also met in London during the winter of 1947. However, differences persisted and they could not arrive at any settlement. The attitude of the Soviet Union to the question of unification of Germany remained hostile. The Soviet Union wanted to retain the eastern part of Germany and also the capital, Berlin, under her control. She was not prepared to arrive at any settlement about the unification of Germany. It may be remembered that Germany was divided into four zones with Russia occupying the eastern part. The Allies thought of unifying the zones which they had occupied and in 1949 they ceded all rights to the people of Germany and formed the Federal Republic of Germany. Subsequently, the Russians converted their zone into the German Democratic Republic after setting up a puppet Communist government.

But the Russians extended all cooperation to the Allies for setting up a court at Nuremberg to try Nazi war criminals. In 1946, 11 war criminals including Hermann Goering were condemned to death by the Nuremberg court. But Hermann Goering committed suicide just before he was to be hanged. Subsequently, several minor Nazi officials were tried and summarily executed for committing atrocities against the Jews in the concentration camps.

The Western Allies did not accord recognition to the German Democratic Republic in East Germany set up by the Soviet Union. But they proclaimed the cessation of war with Germany in general in 1951. The Soviet Union did likewise in 1955. In 1957, France ceded the Saar region to West Germany.

The Western allies and the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty with Austria and thereby recognised its independence. Austria was to have the same frontiers as existed before the outbreak of the Second World War.

## Japan

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Japan surrendered in October 1945 and the instrument of her surrender was received by General Douglas MacArthur on the ship *Missouri*. Japan was placed under the allied control led by MacArthur. He took steps to bring about a peaceful atmosphere in that country. The Soviet Union was

not ready to sign a peace agreement with Japan. Therefore the United States convened a Congress of 48 nations at San Francisco. It was there that a peace treaty was signed (September 8, 1951) which reduced the territory of Japan to its four main islands. Japan surrendered the Kuril islands and the southern Sakhalin to Russia. She surrendered Formosa (Taiwan) to Nationalist China and recognised the independence of Korea. She transferred some of her mandated Pacific Islands to the United States. The Soviet Union signed an agreement with Japan at Moscow in October 1956 and thereby ended its state of war. By this treaty, the diplomatic relations were restored and Japanese prisoners were sent back to Japan. In 1957, Japan was admitted as a member of the United Nations. Thus after a lapse of 12 years the world witnessed peace and security. However, the peace that was established was not real peace. It divided Europe into Democratic West and Communist East.

## **Cold War**

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Soon after the conclusion of World War II, Europe witnessed the advent of the Cold War between the communist countries led by Russia and the Capitalist-West led by the United States of America. By Cold War it is meant a continued state of tension and psychological warfare between two groups of power. This continued state of tension expressed itself through threats of war, accusations and subversion. All the weapons of psychological warfare were used. The Cold War which continued to bedevil international relations lasted until 1989. The principal cause of the Cold War was the attempt made by the Soviet Union to dominate the whole world through the spread of its ideology. She made covert and overt attempts to foist communist rule in countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The strategy of the communists included extending support to the cause of national movements in Asia and Africa. She condemned the imperialist countries of Europe and America for enslaving many countries of Asia and Africa. She denounced the ways of capitalist countries for exploiting the resources of their colonies for their own benefit and thereby leaving them impoverished.

Russia carried on the propaganda of explaining the evils of capitalism. Communist parties grew up in all the countries which

received moral support from the Soviet Union. As against this strategy of the Soviet Union the Western allies adopted a mild attitude. They did not like countries to come under communist domination. The Western Allies led by the United States of America tried to contain the spread of communism by rendering military and economic aid to several nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. For example, she rendered economic aid to the war-torn countries of Europe through a plan called the Marshall plan. In the course of a few years the United States government gave \$12 billion as aid to many democratically elected governments in Europe. She would have extended this aid to the communist satellite countries also, but the Soviet Union came in the way.

The Soviet Union established its control and influence on Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Albania, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria. These countries were dominated by Russia, and they adopted the Russian Constitution as their model. Soon after World War II the Soviet Union brought about a coup in all these countries by which she foisted the communist rule there. She prevented these countries from receiving economic aid under the Marshall plan. In course of time, President Tito of Yugoslavia quarrelled with Stalin of the Soviet Union and established his own brand of communism in his country.

The influence of communism swept many countries of Asia and Africa. The Russians supported the Chinese communists in all possible ways to cause a revolution in 1949. After the revolution of 1949, the communists came into power in China. The nationalist Chinese led by Chiang Kai-shek fled to the nearby island of Formosa (Taiwan). The fall of China into the hands of the communists in 1949 was a great victory for the Soviet Union. It was a serious blow to the efforts made by America to establish a "Free World".

When the Free World was threatened by communism, the United States government under the presidency of Harry Truman had to take steps to ensure its security. It was then realised that the Free World had to be protected by a military alliance of Western countries. The Cold War gathered momentum with the outbreak of civil war in Greece. The local communists tried to overthrow the democratically elected government with the secret support of the Soviet Union. Similarly, Turkey was also in danger of communist subversion. Taking these factors into consideration,

President Truman gave military and economic aid to them with which these two countries protected themselves. Thus it showed that military and economic aid would help the nations of the Free World to protect themselves from communist takeover.

When Russia violated the Yalta and Potsdam agreements by retaining her control over East Germany, the Western World had no choice other than establishing an elected government in West Germany in due course of time. The western allies integrated their military zones into a single economic entity and replaced the Reichsmark currency with the Deutsche Mark on June 20, 1948. This angered the Soviets and they imposed the "Berlin Blockade" which began on June 24, 1948. By this blockade, the western zones (zones of Germany under western occupation) were denied rail, road and canal access to West Berlin (sectors of Berlin controlled by western allies) which deprived the people there of food and other essential commodities. This situation compelled the western allies to supply food and other essential items to West Berlin by air (Berlin Airlift). The Berlin Airlift proved to be very successful, with more than two million tons of food and other supplies reaching West Berlin during the blockade. The west also retaliated against the Soviet Union by imposing embargo on strategic exports from the eastern bloc. The Soviet Union had to finally end the blockade on May 12, 1949. This resulted in the formation of two German states, namely, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), with Berlin city being split between the two. The Berlin blockade made the Western Allies think in terms of finding a military solution to the problem posed by the Soviet Union.

Alarmed by the aggressive attitude of the Soviet Union, five western European nations, namely, Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Brussels on March 17, 1948, and formed a military defensive alliance. The members of this alliance desired that the US should protect them from the danger posed by Soviet expansionism. Along with seven other countries, namely, the US, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, they signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington DC on April 4, 1949. This collective military alliance came to be known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Subsequently, Greece and Turkey joined the

NATO. In 1950, General Eisenhower was appointed the supreme commander of the NATO forces. The main treaty provided that "an armed attack against one would be regarded as an attack against all". The member-countries of the NATO held meetings of their defence personnel and brought about unified military command. The member-countries led by the USA spent large sums of money to equip the NATO forces with most modern weapons. At last, the Allies persuaded the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) to join the NATO, as the fifteenth member. As against the formation of NATO, the Soviet Union brought about a defence pact with the communist satellite countries of Europe. This pact was called the Warsaw Pact which provided for the defence of its members from the threat of the Western Allies.

Till 1949, the USA was the only country in the world which had the know-how to manufacture an atom bomb. However, this monopoly was broken when Russia exploded its first atom bomb in September 1949. The threat of a nuclear war between the two superpowers loomed large before the people of the world. The Cold War further accentuated when President Truman ordered the American scientists to manufacture a bomb which would be thousand times deadlier than the atomic bomb. The American scientists succeeded in their efforts to produce and explode the hydrogen bomb in 1952. As against this threat, Russia also produced a hydrogen bomb and exploded it successfully in 1953. Thus the two superpowers entered into a race for manufacturing nuclear bombs which scared the people of the world.

The Cold War was intensified when Eisenhower was elected president of the United States of America in 1953. John Foster Dulles became the secretary of state. Meanwhile the Korean war began in 1950. The USA led by some members of the UNO fought to prevent aggression by North Korea on South Korea. North Korea had become a communist country while the South was under the influence of the USA. When the UNO forces pushed the communists back beyond the 38th parallel, the Chinese communists began to help the North Koreans. It was then that American General MacArthur appealed to the President to declare war on China. When President Truman refused to oblige him, MacArthur made some caustic comments about the president for which he was dismissed. President Truman realised that if the UN forces attacked

communist China, Russia would come to her rescue. The war would turn into a world war. Peace was brought about in 1953. The Korean war, no doubt, intensified the Cold War existing between the communist world and the Western Allies.

John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of State, was an inveterate enemy of communism. He believed that the communists in the world would understand only the show of force. Therefore he decided to protect the free world through forming a number of military alliances. He believed that the free world should threaten the communists with war, and this policy was called "the policy of containment", or "brinkmanship". In 1954 the United States of America established a military alliance of some free countries in Southeast Asia. The Alliance was called the SEATO which was directed against the two communist giants, Russia and China.

John Foster Dulles did not believe in the policy of neutrality which was followed by many Asian countries under the leadership of the prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. He said that this policy was immoral and not viable. During the year 1953-54, China was intending to invade Formosa, the base of the Nationalist Chinese. The United States government had to render all assistance to the Nationalist Chinese (Taiwan government) to withstand the bombardment of the Chinese communists on their island. During the same year the Vietminh (the communists controlling North Vietnam) laid siege to the fortress of Dien Bien Phu where a large French army was taking shelter. The American government hesitated to give support to the French as that would mean a war with the two communist giants—Russia and China. The Vietminh forces led by their great leader, Ho Chi Minh, finally succeeded in capturing it.

Stalin's death in March 1953 brought about a change in the leadership in the Soviet Union. There was some kind of collective leadership in Russia up to 1955, but then Khruschev (Party secretary) and Bulganin came to power after a purge. Their emergence to power somewhat thawed the existing Cold War since they believed in peaceful co-existence of the capitalist and the communist world. The Russians signed the agreement by which the big four powers ended their occupation of Austria. The Russian leaders proved to be friendly and allowed press

correspondents and others to visit Soviet Russia. This attitude encouraged the Western statesmen to the Geneva Summit in July 1955 which was attended by President Eisenhower and also other statesmen of the Soviet Union, Britain and France. Although the Summit did not yield much, it appeared that there was some thaw in the Cold War. The Western Allies were happy when Khruschev started criticising Stalin's policies in 1956.

In October 1956, two important events, the Hungarian revolt and the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt, had far-reaching repercussions on the Cold War. The revolt of the Hungarians was brutally suppressed by their government with the support of the Soviet Union. Many people of the world expected that the USA would intervene to rescue the Hungarians but they were disappointed. In the second incident, Britain and France attacked Egypt for nationalising the Suez Canal Company owned by them. The Russians threatened Britain and France by declaring that if they did not stop the war Russia would attack them with missiles. The Americans also condemned Britain and France for launching a war against Egypt. As a result, both Britain and France withdrew from the war, and in the former, Anthony Eden's government fell. The Russian threat worked. The "Suez crisis" brought the world to the brink of a world war. Fortunately, it was averted due to the pressure applied by USA on her allies.

Both the USA and the Soviet Union began the manufacture of intercontinental ballistic missiles whose range extended up to 10,000 km. The Soviet Union sent 'Sputnik' (October 1957), the first man-made satellite, into space which orbited round the earth. The Americans felt intensely jealous at the scientific and technological advance of the Soviet Union and subsequently they were afraid that Russia might use it for attacking their country. The US government began a crash programme to manufacture a missile which would match the skill of the Soviet scientists. The US missiles, when manufactured, had a range of 15,000 km and all the cities of the Soviet Union were within its range. Subsequently, the USA produced the Polaris missiles which could be launched from nuclear submarines. The whole world watched with bated breath the nuclear race going on between these two superpowers. In 1959, the Russians launched a rocket to the moon. The Russians continued to

maintain their superiority in the exploration of outer space, but the Americans also made matching progress in this field.

In 1958, Khruschev became prime minister and created the "Berlin crisis". He said that he would cancel the Potsdam Agreement of 1945 which divided Berlin into four sectors. He said that this arrangement had become obsolete and he proposed to transfer the Russian sector to East Berlin. He desired that the Western Allies too should do likewise. He issued a vague ultimatum to make them fall in line with him. He also proposed that Berlin should become a free city. The Western powers refused to negotiate on this matter. In 1959, there was a conference of leaders at Geneva which was fruitless. In 1959, Vice-President Nixon went to the Soviet Union and Khruschev visited the USA. In May 1960, before the summit conference was to take place in Paris, the U-2 incident occurred. An American U-2 reconnaissance plane which was on a spying mission over the Soviet territory was shot down and Khrushchev condemned the USA for violating the international law.

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## Recovery of Europe

The Second World War caused heavy destruction all over Europe including Britain. In Britain four million houses were destroyed during the war. Several docks, railway yards and factories were ruined. About 25 per cent of the people became homeless. Food shortage was rampant and cartridges were supplied freely to the people who could shoot squirrels for food. The industrial system in the country needed revamping. Raw materials and food had to be imported since Britain needed these items badly to survive. Forty-eight million people were starving at the streets and therefore something had to be done. During the war Britain drew heavily on her investments abroad. Consequently, she became a debtor country. During the war many ports had been destroyed, and trade and commerce were at a standstill.

Sir Winston Churchill appealed to the people for a fresh mandate to continue his government, but it was rejected. Elections were held in 1945 which resulted in the downfall of Churchill's coalition war ministry. The Labour Party led by Prime Minister Clement Atlee came to power in July 1945. Churchill remarked in his autobiography *My Early Years*, "Those who can win war can rarely make a good peace and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war." Ernest Bevin became the foreign secretary. The Labour government took immediate steps to cope with the serious economic problems facing the country. Restrictions and controls were imposed on imports. The British population was forced to endure hardships and privations due to rationing. To improve the sagging economy, the following steps were taken: (a) A central planning commission was appointed to study possible sources of national revenue and to apportion the same for

distribution, (b) long-term plan for the nationalisation of basic industries, (c) plan to improve industries remaining with the private sector, and (d) long-term development plan for improving agriculture to make the country self-sufficient in food production. The Labour government's plan was not based on the Soviet model but on the basis of British socialist philosophy of those times. The first step taken to ameliorate the conditions was in February 1946. The Bank of England was nationalised. Secondly, the coal industry also came to be nationalised. In course of time nationalisation of gas, telephone, and electricity services were also accomplished. It was followed by nationalisation of road, rail and canal transports. Finally, Britain witnessed the nationalisation of iron and steel industry in 1949.

## Foreign Loans

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The Labour government in Britain sought soft loan from the government of the United States of America and the latter obliged her in December 1945 by lending 3.75 billion dollars. The strength of the armed forces in the country was drastically reduced to cater to the manpower requirements of the industries. Working hours increased. When the Marshall Plan came into force Britain received liberal aid. It resulted in marked industrial progress, and there was an improvement by 18 per cent over the year 1938. Exports increased by 25 per cent and imports reduced by 20 per cent compared to 1938 figures. In 1949 Britain devalued the pound to boost her exports and it was followed by nearly 28 countries. By December 1950 Britain recovered sufficiently and was well on her way towards making further progress. The Marshall Plan ceased to assist Britain any longer. In 1951 the Labour Party government won the elections with a slender majority but it asked for a new mandate. The subsequent elections resulted in the Conservatives gaining majority with a slender margin. Churchill formed the new government. In the meantime George VI died on February 6, 1952 and was succeeded to the throne by his daughter, Elizabeth II, who was then twenty-five years old.

## Fascist Spain

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Although Hitler and Mussolini lent a helping hand to General Franco to

come to power in Spain, the latter only showed his willingness to join the Axis powers during the time of war. Spain did not actively participate in the Second World War. During the early years Germany and Italy exerted their influence on General Franco and tried to coax him to participate in the war. They promised him the island of Gibraltar and a part of North Africa after the war on the condition that he assist them in their war efforts. The promise was too tempting and General Franco sent an ambassador to meet Hitler to intimate his consent. However the negotiations became protracted. Hitler became somewhat cautious in his approach to redeem the promise. When Germany invaded Russia in 1941, many Spaniards went to render voluntary services to the Germans. Even after this Franco wavered about assisting the Axis powers in their war efforts. But when Germany did not succeed in defeating Russia, Franco began to have second thoughts about joining. Subsequently, the USA joined the Western Allies and the war was going in favour of the latter. It was at this time that Spain changed her attitude. She began to maintain her neutrality. General Franco of Spain offered his good services to the Western Allies for bringing about a speedy settlement or conclusion of the war. However, the Western Allies spurned his offer and continued the war. It was during this time that many in Spain expected Franco's government to fall. But his government remained stable and introduced several reforms. In May 1945 he proclaimed a bill granting the citizens fundamental rights subject to some limitations. And one of those limitations included a rule which said that it would be illegal to criticise the principles of his regime. Assemblies were permitted for 'lawful purposes'. The new charter prevented non-Catholics from holding public offices in Spain.

The relations between Spain and the Western Allies continued to remain cold until serious differences developed between the latter and the Soviet Union. The Western Allies softened their attitude towards Spain. It was considered essential to have Spain's active support for a new military alliance formed after the War, called NATO. An attempt was made to include Spain among the list of countries eligible to receive economic aid under the Marshall Plan. But there was strong opposition to this move and finally the Spanish admission fell through.

In 1947 General Franco announced the restoration of monarchy in

Spain to establish close links with the Western Allies. But his efforts failed. Meanwhile, the US government approached Spain for a treaty by which the latter could provide the US government with air and naval bases in exchange for economic aid. Franco, whose government was declining at that time due to serious economic problems, gladly accepted the proposal. In 1955 Spain was admitted into the United Nations. She ceded her territories in North Africa to the newly independent country, Morocco. After the death of Franco, Don Juan Carlos (grandson of Alphonso XIII) succeeded to the Spanish throne.

## The Italian Republic

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Following the fall of Mussolini (July 1943) during the War, King Victor Emmanuel III announced his retirement. He was subjected to severe criticism for playing second fiddle to the fallen dictator. When the Allies entered Rome, Crown Prince Umberto permitted the formation of a coalition government of all anti-fascist parties in June 1944. The new government had to grapple with serious economic problems facing the country. Unfortunately, the coalition government was unable to cope with the problems despite the efforts made by two cabinets. In the end the leader of the Christian Democrats, Alcide De Gasperi, formed his cabinet in 1945. Following a persistent demand for establishing a republic, a referendum was held in June 1946. To save the constitutional monarchy in Italy, King Victor Emmanuel III abdicated his throne in favour of his son, Crown Prince Umberto. But King Umberto ruled for a short time only. The referendum favoured the establishment of a republic and the new king went into exile. A coalition cabinet consisting of some socialists, communists and Christian democrat members was formed and led by Alcide De Gasperi. His government brought about a speedy settlement about the future of Italy with the victorious Western Allies, in February 1947. The Italians lost some of their colonies and Trieste. They felt that they had not been given fair treatment by the Western Allies despite the help given to them to defeat the Nazis in Italy. Therefore there was a vociferous demand that the treaty be revised. At the end of the war, the treaty was ratified by the assembly and the allied troops were withdrawn from Italy.

The Constituent Assembly drew up a new constitution for the establishment of a new republic. Of much interest to everyone was Article Seven which provided for the recognition of "Roman Catholicism as the sole state religion and interpreting the *concordat* of 1929 in the constitution". The republicans and conservative-socialists vehemently opposed the inclusion of this article, but strangely the communists gave their support. This article was finally accepted to be included in the constitution by a majority in the constituent assembly. The draft of the constitution provided for a bicameral legislature, namely, a chamber of deputies and a senate. A president for the republic had to be chosen by these two bodies meeting in joint session. The prime minister was to be chosen by the president and the former would choose the members of his cabinet from the legislature. The new constitution granted equal rights to all.

As per the new constitution elections were held in April 1948 and the Christian-Democrats won a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. Even then, De Gasperi, instead of forming a cabinet from his own party, decided to include some republicans, liberals and the moderate-socialists in his cabinet. The communists were thus isolated. But they created a lot of trouble for De Gasperi's government by organising strikes in factories and creating unrest among the farmers.

The coalition government made rapid strides in the economy of the country. Industries were started, transport and communication systems restored, and merchant marine began operating again. Raw materials were purchased from abroad to improve industrial production. The coalition government grappled with other serious problems like food shortage and unemployment in the country. Steps were taken to educate the farmers on the need for modernising agricultural methods, sowing of better seeds, and crop rotation system and so on.

In 1947, the gold reserves of the government depleted considerably. As the government did not have enough funds it could not import foodgrains from abroad. It was then that the government appealed to the US government for the supply of wheat. The latter sent 50,000 tons of wheat and gave a loan through Import and Export Bank. The Marshall Plan rendered further financial assistance by providing about rapid economic recovery. One and a quarter billion dollars aid was given to the

Italian government between April 1948 and February 1951. In 1953 the Gasperi government resigned after losing a vote of confidence. It was followed by the formation of Giuseppe Pella's cabinet government. It also resigned in 1954. The next cabinet to assume office was that of Amintore Fan Fani (left of centre Christian Democrat). It lost its majority in January 31, 1959. Thereafter Italy suffered political instability.

## France

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During World War II, France was very much affected. Her sea ports like Brest, Le Havre, Saint Nazaire and Toulon were almost destroyed. Many industries had come to a standstill. A part of France remained occupied by the German army. A puppet government of Germany, the Vichy government, functioned over the rest of France. During the last year of World War II (1945) France was totally liberated. Due to Charles de Gaulle, the French volunteers rendered valuable assistance to the other Western Allies in the liberation of their country. After the conclusion of the war General Charles de Gaulle took over the reins of government as a military dictator. He was advised by a consultative assembly. He initiated many successful moves to accelerate the war efforts. He took many decisive steps for improving the war-torn economy of his country. His regime led to the revival of French military glory. France could claim a lion's share in defeating the Axis powers in 1945. It was no less on account of this, that the big three powers finally admitted France to equal partnership in the occupation of Germany after her defeat. General de Gaulle weaned away the workers from communism by introducing several reforms to improve their conditions. He hoped that by doing so he would be able to instil a spirit of national unity among the labour class.

After the War, General de Gaulle felt unhappy at the demand for democratisation of the government. Being an army general he knew that this new trend would pave the way for petty feuds and politicking among the politicians—a feature which was common during the tenure of the Third French Republic. Therefore he could not reconcile himself to the new situation which was fast developing. He resigned his post as military dictator. The socialists also created trouble for him by reducing

his proposals for heavy military budget. Had he wished he could have easily succeeded in staging a *coup d' etat* and come to power. After De Gaulle's exit (January 1946), France entered into a short interval of 'tripartitism' for the next one and half years. The new government was led by socialists, communists and MRP leaders who could not properly guide the nation. The three governing parties agreed to establish a welfare state by introducing a series of reforms, which was maintained by successive governments.

Among the reforms introduced were the nationalisation of coal mines, gas, electricity, insurance and banking companies. Additional pay was given to workers and other employees working in factories. A social security legislation was passed which improved the economic conditions of 50 per cent of the French population. However this legislation was severely criticised because it added a heavy burden (16 per cent of the national income) to the state exchequer. Unfortunately, the French administration became highly bureaucratic in character and ultimately resulted in creating anarchic conditions. The social welfare measures necessitated the establishment of a national planning office under Jean Monnet which improved the French economy. The Monnet plan helped a great deal in restoring its health. In May 1947 the communist ministers were forced to leave. It was expected that they would create chaos in the country.

The constitution of the Fourth French Republic proved to be unsuitable. The Gaullists believed in the drafting of a new constitution. The left block which dominated the assembly too desired to form a single parliamentary body for the sake of maintaining authority and control over the whole country. Since the De Gaullists and the MRP opposed this proposal, the matter was referred to the people of France. It had to be decided by the people through a referendum. The conservative French rejected the old constitution in May 1946. Therefore it became necessary to elect members for the new constituent assembly for drafting another constitution. Thus the new constitution came into being (December 24, 1946) which provided for a bicameral legislature—a national assembly to be elected on the basis of universal suffrage, and a council of the republic to be chosen by means of indirect elections. The former was made powerful, and the latter a check on the former. The new constitution

provided for the election of a president to be chosen by the joint session of both Houses for a term of seven years. Unfortunately, the French were afraid of having a strong executive and therefore the new constitution provided for a weak presidency. As a result the Fourth French Republic witnessed an era of political instability throughout its tenure. Short-lived cabinets and coalition governments became the order of the day. The coalition cabinets had an average life of less than six months. Therefore it is no surprise that 17 governments were unseated from power in the course of eight years (from 1945 to May 1953).

At the conclusion of the war, France suffered considerable damage to her economy. It may be said that twice the number of buildings got damaged compared to the First World War. Homes and factories suffered extensive damage. The transport and communication systems got paralysed. Merchant ships, cars, railway stations and bridges were mostly destroyed. The people suffered for want of food, clothing and shelter. Luxury items could not be seen in the markets and the tourist industry was much affected. There were no funds to repair and expand industries. The nation faced economic bankruptcy. This state of affairs continued not only on account of war but because of the French themselves. Poor equipment and outmoded methods and uneconomical holdings hampered industrial production.

It was only after the receipt of liberal economic aid from the Marshall Plan that the country began to make rapid development. The money provided under the Plan enabled the French government to import the much needed goods, namely, tools and machines. By 1949 France achieved a certain level of industrial production which could be compared to the pre-war level. Similarly the food position improved. France received many displaced Germans and Italian farm workers and thereby overcame the manpower shortage in the field of agriculture. The French government imported farm machinery from USA and Britain. The government was in a position to reduce imports and encourage exports. The new machines helped the French government in reopening some coal mines. In course of time France was on the way to achieving economic self-sufficiency. In 1952 France made another bid to improve her economic and financial health under Premier Monsieur Pinay. He tried the 'triple gamble' by building up the purchasing power of money

by checking prices to balance the budget without any fresh taxes and avoid devaluation of the French. Though the outcome of this gamble looked promising, it continuously affected the manufacturers and traders. The formers retrenched hundreds of workers. When Pinay's cabinet fell, Premier Rene Mayer came to power in January 1953. But his government also fell in May 1953, that was when a bill seeking to revise the constitution came up before the National Assembly. Thus France suffered from governmental instability due to the existence of too many political parties and factions. In 1954 M. Coty assumed office.

## **Fall of the Fourth French Republic**

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Several factors were responsible for fall of the Fourth French Republic. Primarily it was the political instability of the French government. The Assembly had the power to defeat the governments coming in succession without forcing a general election. Therefore the successive governments could not attend to the serious problems facing the country. These problems were mostly economic in nature and also colonial in character.

## **Pierre Mendes France**

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Therefore the type of government which the French required was a party with a clear majority in the assembly which could introduce tax reforms, end Indo-China War and build an effective lobby against certain sections of French society which were gaining economic advantages at the cost of the nation. Unfortunately, on many of these issues, the political parties in France could not arrive at any understanding. It was during the 1950s that a radical deputy in the National Assembly named Pierre Mendes France warned the people of the country about the impending perils. He pleaded for the cessation of Indo-China War where the government was wasting much of its money and lives. He advocated that the money thus saved may be spent on the economic development of the country. He demanded tax reforms so that the poor need not have to bear the excessive burden of taxes. He also advocated self-help instead of depending upon aid from the United States government.

He failed to form a government in 1953 and subsequently the French suffered a most humiliating defeat at the hands of the Vietminh forces at

Dien Bien Phu (Indo-China) in spring 1954. The United States government could not extend its support to the French forces there. The French defeat at Indo-China resulted in the appointment of Pierre Mendes France as the premier. He succeeded in negotiating a political settlement with the Vietminh at Geneva. This settlement led to the partition of Vietnam into North and South Vietnams. The South Vietnam had a non-communist government supported by the western imperial powers. He also succeeded in reviving the Western Economic Union which coaxed West Germany to join the NATO. He could have introduced some much needed internal reforms in those days but his government fell in February 1955 on the question of Tunisia. The Opposition parties gained enough strength to get him removed from power and it was then that Mendes France realised the necessity of introducing electoral reforms in the country. In other words, he desired that the French should be in a position to give one political party enough majority to enable it to come to power.

Subsequently, Mendes France became a minister without portfolio in Guy Mollet's cabinet. This new cabinet government brought about some colonial settlements. It agreed to give autonomy to Morocco and Tunisia in March 1956. Similarly it introduced some measures to bring about decentralisation in French West Africa, equatorial Africa and Madagascar. These measures enabled the natives to achieve a reasonable share in the management of their own governments. Unfortunately Guy Mollet's government could not find a suitable solution to the problem of Algerian independence where a large number of European *colons* had settled. These colons were dead set against losing their privileges and they were represented in the French National Assembly.

## Algerian Struggle for Independence

A war of liberation in Algeria began in 1956. France experienced great difficulty in suppressing this war in her colony. She sent 400,000 French soldiers there and spent one billion francs a day. The prestige of France began to decline in the eyes of many Europeans because of this war. Guy Mollet's government became extremely unpopular because he sought a compromise with the rebels in Algeria. His government fell in May 1957.

In May 1958 there was a revolt by the army officers and colons in Algiers, who feared that the French government was arriving at a secret compromise with the Algerian nationalists. In Algeria a combined rebel government was formed by the military officers and colons.

The developments in Algeria compelled the rightist elements in Algeria and also in France to demand the return of General de Gaulle to take over the leadership of the French government. This great General agreed to do so on certain conditions, namely, that he be given emergency powers for six months and power to amend the constitution of the Fourth French Republic to suit his convenience. His conditions were unacceptable. However, things worsened in Algeria. President Coty warned the party leaders that they must agree to the conditions laid down by General de Gaulle or face civil war in the country. Left with no choice, the National Assembly agreed to hand over emergency powers to General de Gaulle to guide the destiny of the nation.

## De Gaulle and the Fifth French Republic

De Gaulle's ideas on the new constitution which would provide political stability were accepted by a popular referendum which was held in September 1958. The new constitution came into force on October 4, 1958. Thus the Fifth Republic was born and the people of France chose De Gaulle as President in January 1959. Marcel Debre became the premier. The new constitution transferred a major share of power from the National Assembly into the hands of the executive. Under Article 16 the President was to remain in power for a term of seven years and assume dictatorial powers, if circumstances demanded it. [see page 296]

## Belgium

Christian Socialists and Socialists were the two principal political parties in Belgium which obtained a majority of seats in the Belgian Parliament in the 1946 elections. After bitter dispute, the two political parties agreed on a compromise regarding who should succeed to power. King Leopold (who had earlier surrendered to the Germans during the war) returned to occupy the throne. However, he abdicated his throne in favour of his son who made considerable progress in achieving economic stability for

the country. He checked inflation to a great extent. Belgium reaped economic benefit by exploiting her colony, Congo (Africa). Congo was rich in copper, uranium and rubber. Belgium also gained certain economic advantages by joining a tariff union called 'Benelux' (meaning Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg). The 'Belgian government introduced several reforms including the granting of the right of vote to women, social benefits and public education for children.

## **The Netherlands**

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A coalition of Catholic and labour parties formed the post-war government in the Netherlands under the titular sovereignty of Queen Wilhelmina. She subsequently abdicated her throne in favour of her daughter, Juliana, because of her old age (1948). Comparatively Netherland's progress towards achieving economic recovery was slower. It was due to revolts breaking out in her colony, the East Indies. Finally, New Guinea remained with her but the others largely went to form the independent Republic of Indonesia. The Netherlands ceded autonomy to her other colonies, namely, Surinam and West Indies.

## **Denmark**

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Being an agricultural country, Denmark's progress was rapid towards achieving economic recovery after the war. A coalition government was formed after the war by the socialists and liberals. King Christian X, who had earlier been imprisoned by the Germans, died and he was succeeded by his son Frederick IX. In Denmark's colony, Iceland, a majority of the Icelanders voted in favour of independence. An independent republic was established there in 1944. In 1953 Denmark lowered the voting age from 25 to 23 years. She ceded autonomy to Greenland and offered her the membership of the "Danish Commonwealth". Greenland sent her representatives to the Danish Parliament.

## **Norway**

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Germans occupied Norway during the early years of the Second World War. After the war the Socialist Labour Party won a majority of seats in

the Norwegian Parliament and formed the cabinet. The Norwegian King Haakon VII, who had escaped from German prison and remained in exile, returned. After his death in 1957, his son, Olav, succeeded. Norway made rapid advance towards economic recovery. The new government introduced several measures to improve the economy and public health.

## **Finland**

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Finland (a small country) ceded some territories to her powerful neighbour, the Soviet Union. She was able to maintain her independence and democratic government despite the presence of her aggressive neighbour, the Soviet Union. The coalition governments which succeeded one after another were formed by socialists, agrarians and liberals. These governments introduced several welfare measures during the presidency of Julio Paasiki, a socialist (1945 to 1956). Subsequently, he was succeeded by an able premier, Dr Urho Kakkonen.

## **Greece**

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Greece joined the Western Allies during the war and her territories were invaded by the Germans, Italians and the Bulgarians. After the war they had to vacate, and King George II returned from exile to rule the country. After a short interval, he was succeeded by his brother, Paul, in 1947. An attempt was made by the local communists with the help of the communists of Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria to overthrow the monarchy and turn Greece into a satellite country of the Soviet Union. The unrest was followed by a civil war which proved to be prolonged and expensive. In the end the Greek government, which was weak then, received military and economic assistance from the government of the United States. Thus the communist attempt to overthrow the democratic Greek government was foiled. Meanwhile, President Tito of Yugoslavia disagreed with the Russian leader and stopped giving aid to the Greek communists. In 1954, the government of Greece concluded a defence agreement with Turkey and Yugoslavia which was to remain in effect for the next 20 years.

## **Neutral Countries**

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Switzerland, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal and Spain maintained neutrality during the war. All these nations of Western Europe experienced difficulties of various kinds. In general, they lost much of their profitable trade with the belligerents when the war ended. The socialists of Sweden formed a socialist government. It introduced welfare measures. The socialist government brought about a planned economy. In 1951 King Gustavus V passed away and was succeeded by his son, Gustavus VI. Switzerland maintained strict neutrality during the war. She was very much wedded to the democratic set-up. She refused to become a member of the United Nations. Her citizens worked very hard and improved the economy of the country. Their income was mainly from export of clocks, watches, chemicals, textiles and machinery.

In 1949 Britain granted total independence to the Irish Republic (Eire). Eamon De Valera and John Costello, both belonging to the Fianna Fail Party succeeded one after another. They introduced several welfare measures which were calculated to improve public health, housing, agriculture and industrial conditions in the country. The country's main setback lay in the decline of population which was due to the loss of Ulster (Northern Ireland) which was united with Britain.

Portugal witnessed the rule of dictators ever since Marshal Carmona assumed power in 1926. During World War II she remained neutral. When Carmona died in 1951, he was succeeded by Francisco Craveiro Lopez. The next government was led by Dr Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. He established a veiled dictatorship and opposition to his government was mercilessly crushed. It is strange that Portugal maintained her hold over her colonies for a longer time than others.

## Turkey

After Kemal Pasha's death Turkey was led by Ismet Inonu who was incidentally the country's first prime minister. During his tenure of office, he kept his country neutral, particularly during the war, but he maintained a close alliance with Britain and signed an Agreement of Mutual Assistance with her to safeguard his country's interests. He signed a Non-aggression Pact with France in 1939. Turkey joined the war on the side of Western Allies in February 1945.

The country made great strides of progress during the regime of Ismet Inonu who led the Republican People's Party (in Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). With American economic and military aid, his Party's government introduced several reforms to modernise agriculture and industries. Turkey was in a position to protect herself from communist menace with American military aid. In 1950 the Democratic Party came to power and Turkey joined the American camp and became anti-communist. Turkey became a member of the NATO in 1951 which was formed mainly by the United States of America in 1949. After the advent of the Democratic Party Turkey witnessed political instability. The Democratic Party broke into factions and one of the splinter parties became 'Freedom Party'. General Gursel successfully overthrew the government by a coup in May 1960.

## West Germany

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The Western Allies saw the rise of Soviet imperialism and decided that it was a greater menace than Western Europe. Therefore they (Allied Council) tried to keep West Germany (East Germany having turned into a communist satellite) strong. They sponsored a democratic constitution and the holding of free elections in the British, American and French occupied zones, each having several states under its control. In 1948 they united all these states and formed the Federal Republic of Germany (FDR). Elections were held to choose representatives to sit in the Bundestag and Bundesrat. After the elections a coalition government was formed which was led by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. It was in 1957 that Adenauer's party, the Christian Democrats, won a overwhelming majority of seats against its erstwhile partner, the Social Democrats, and formed its own government. It was during the chancellorship of Adenauer that West Germany made the most impressive economic recovery in the world. France surrendered the Saar region to West Germany. The latter paid compensation to Israel for the loss and humiliation suffered by the Jews during Hitler's regime. The Western Allies persuaded West Germany to join the NATO and she did so in 1955, the year in which she had become a sovereign and independent state. France and West Germany became allies and joined forces in the

Schuman Plan. Both signed a treaty of friendship in 1963.

Austria was liberated from Nazi rule in 1945. It was followed by Allied occupation. A provisional government was set up. Four occupation zones were set up like the one in Germany by the Allies. In May 1955, the Soviet Union with other allies signed treaty with Austria ending occupation.

## Communist Russia as Superpower and Her Satellites

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One of the greatest outcomes of World War II was the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower. Due to the downfall of the two imperialist powers, Britain and France, as the aftermath of the war, the political vacuum created by them was filled by the Soviet Union. The people of the Soviet Union sacrificed much at the instance of their dictator, Stalin, for keeping their country strong before the war broke out. Stalin's Five Year Plans brought about rapid economic progress. Despite the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union Germany attacked her in 1941. It goes to the credit of the Soviet Union that she was partly responsible for the Allied final victory at the end of the war. The Western Allies sought her help in the defeat of Japan also and consequently agreed to meet her demands.

At the end of the war USSR suffered 20 million casualties and four and a half million homes were destroyed. Some 40,000 miles of railway track became useless and thousands of machines lay damaged, thereby affecting industries and agriculture. Nevertheless, Stalin reintroduced the Five Year Plans to overcome the ill effects of the war. Despite very adverse conditions, the heroic people, of the Soviet Union sacrificed much to restore the health of the nation's economy. At the time of Stalin's death, the Soviet Union had achieved the level of pre-war production in coal, oil, electricity, iron and steel. In some fields, it surpassed the pre-war level. This rapid economic recovery (except in the field of agriculture) was indeed responsible for her rise to the position of a superpower in the world.

After Stalin's death in 1953 the iron curtain began to lift. The leaders of Russia agreed for the rule of "collective leadership." Georgi M.

Malenkov became the next premier, and the stain of Stalin's tyranny was removed by the secret trial and execution of the secret police chief, Lavrenti Beria, and the release of ten million people in the labour camps. Writers and foreign correspondents were allowed to visit Russia. In 1954 there came the purge which resulted in the fall of Malenkov because he disagreed with Nikita Khrushchev (Party's First Secretary) on economic priorities and on problems posed by nuclear war. At the 20th Party Congress held in February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin and paved the way for the liberalisation of the Soviet regime. The rigidity of Stalin's policies and communist doctrines had to give way to a more acceptable road towards socialism. Molotov was afraid of this liberal trend and revolted with his followers but in 1957 Khrushchev easily gained victory over him in the Central Committee meeting. It led to Molotov's downfall. Nikolai Bulganin also lost his place as premier to Khrushchev in 1957. Khrushchev remained as premier till his resignation in 1964.

## Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union

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It is said that the origin of the Cold War began with post-war Stalin's regime when the Soviet Union overran much of Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1947. Soviet Union was not very much concerned about the future of Germany or German unification once she was in possession of East Germany and East Berlin. What she lost during the First World War to Germany, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, she recovered the same after World War II. Besides extending her control over Eastern Europe she spread her tight grip over Manchuria and North Korea in the Asian continent. After the conclusion of the war the Western Allies dismantled their war-machine but the Soviet Union continued to maintain her troops everywhere including Eastern Europe. Stalin revived the Comintern (now Cominform) in 1947 to spread communism everywhere.

Soon after the war Greece and Turkey were threatened with communist takeover of their respective governments and these crises were averted by the USA. China, the largest country in Asia with a teeming population, turned communist after the 1949 revolution. The Afro-Asian countries which were still under foreign yoke got moral

support from the Soviet Union in their struggle for independence. To prevent a possible attack on her by the Western Allies she created a ring of satellite states around her. At the time of Stalin's death, the Soviet Union not only achieved economic self-sufficiency but also marched ahead in the manufacturing of nuclear bombs. The monopoly of the USA in this field was broken. The Cold War between the USA and the USSR escalated. In 1949 Stalin formed the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), similar to the American Marshall Plan, to bring about rapid economic recovery of communist countries (including Mongolia and Cuba) from the ravages of World War II. During the time of Khrushchev this organisation was strengthened to extend economic control over the communist satellite countries. These countries depended upon the Soviet Union for economic assistance as the western countries relied upon the US economic aid under the Marshall Plan.

Stalin's rigid policies and domination angered President Tito of Yugoslavia. It led to bitter dispute between them and Tito finally broke away from the communist camp of Russia in 1948. The Soviet Union's foreign policy continued to aim at controlling the satellite countries on one hand and supporting the cause of liberation movements of Afro-Asian countries on the other. The Soviet policy towards East and West Germany created a number of problems for the Western Allies since they were thinking of reuniting East and West Germany. When this became impossible due to Russian hostility the Western Allies formed the Federal Republic of Germany. In answer to this move the Soviet Union framed the German Democratic Republic out of East Germany. When the Western Allies formed the NATO to defend themselves, the Soviet Union formed a similar defensive alliance, called the Warsaw Pact, with the help of her satellite states. The Cold War persisted even after Khrushchev came to power in 1957.

## **“Satellite” Communist States**

Soon after World War II, the Soviet Union spread communism, and her immediate neighbours succumbed to its influence. The Western Allies called these countries as satellite communist states. They included Poland, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary,

Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. During the war the Soviet troops occupied these countries and they continued to remain there even after the war. Secondly, most of these countries came to have coalition governments soon after the war, and the communists also joined as equal partners. But subsequently, they received instructions from Stalin to liquidate the other partners (political groups). The communists gained control of police, press and the radio and used it for their propaganda purposes. Some of the communist leaders in these countries received training in Moscow. The Communists destabilised the existing governments after receiving training and help from Soviet Russia. On their successful mission they established 'People's democracies'. Thus eastern European states witnessed the establishment of coalition governments in the beginning but later yielded to the pressure of the communists. Thus they turned into communist satellite states.

## Poland

Poland was attacked by Germany in 1939 and subsequently partitioned between Russia and Germany. When Hitler attacked Russia in 1941 in spite of the Non-aggression Pact, the latter approached the exiled Polish government in London and offered to restore her status and power on the condition that she cede eastern Poland. The government in exile rejected this offer which annoyed Stalin. He recognised the 'provisional government' headed by Boleslav Beirut, a Polish communist. At Yalta Stalin urged Roosevelt and Churchill to recognise Beirut's government which would be prepared to take some exiled leaders also into the cabinet. After the liberation of Poland in 1945 by the Russian Red Army, the provisional government of Poland led by Beirut ceded 70,000 sq miles to the Soviet Union hoping to get enough compensation from the defeated Germany. Meanwhile, elections were held in 1947 which voted the communists to power. The USA and Britain protested saying that the elections were rigged. The new communist government nationalised all basic industries and drafted a new constitution (on the model of the Soviet Union). Beirut became President of the New Republic. This communist government turned totalitarian and expelled all opposition leaders including the exiled leaders taken into the government earlier. Wladislav Gomulka, the secretary of the communist party, was jailed for not showing enough enthusiasm in upholding communist ideals. The Polish Cardinal was also imprisoned for his opposition to the communist government.

## Yugoslavia

During the war there were two resistance movements operating in Yugoslavia, one led by Draja Mihailovich and the other by Joseph Broz (Tito), a communist. In 1944 Russia, with the help of Britain, brought about the unity of these two movements. The king was forced to appoint Tito as his premier. Gradually, Tito became a virtual dictator. He adopted a constitution similar to the one in the Soviet Union. He could not tolerate the dictates of Stalin and Yugoslavia got out of the Soviet camp in spite of being communist. Tito retained his firm control over the country. Mihailovich was executed. The Catholic Archbishop was jailed for his opposition to the communist regime.

## Albania

The story in Albania after the war was more or less similar to that of Yugoslavia. Enver Hoxha, a communist leader, who was trained in Moscow, held the reins of provisional government in November 1945. The USA and Britain agreed to recognise his government if elections were conducted fairly. The elections were held and the communists led by Hoxha came to power. They expelled King Zog and turned their country into a People's Republic in January 1946. This communist government obeyed the dictates of the Soviet Union until 1961. Later Albania broke away from the Russian camp and became China's friend.

## Bulgaria

In Bulgaria monarchy came to an end in 1946 and it was succeeded by a "People's Republic". The new government adopted a constitution similar to the one Russia was having. Georgi Dimitrov established his dictatorship. After some time Dimitrov eliminated all opposition to his regime. When Dimitrov died in 1949, he was succeeded by Vassil Kolarov. Kolarov also had his training in Moscow and he maintained his iron grip over the party and the country.

## Romania

In 1940, Romania was partitioned, and Russia, Bulgaria and Hungary got large chunks of her land. It was a great blow to King Carol II (1930-1940) who abdicated his throne in favour of his son, Michael. Michael entrusted the administration of the country to a pro-Nazi dictator named General Ion Antonescu. Antonescu was overthrown and constitutional monarchy under King Michael was restored in 1944. Michael appointed pro-communist leaders, Petru Groza and Ana Pauker as premier and foreign minister respectively due to heavy pressure from the Soviet Union. Ana Pauker, who was the disciple of Stalin, finally brought about the overthrow of King Michael in December 1947. Subsequently, a "People's Republic" was established which adopted a communist constitution. A typical communist dictatorship was established after banning all opposition parties in the country.

## Hungary

Hungary tried to keep herself away from the Soviet influence in spite of the presence of the Soviet troops and also pressure from the communist party. A group of Hungarian communist members tried to establish a “provisional government” in December 1944 but the November 1945 elections resulted in the emergence of Ferenc Nagy, a great democrat, to power. Under his leadership Hungary adopted a liberal republican constitution. However, the communists applied much pressure upon him which was subsequently followed by a Soviet threat, resulting in Nagy taking communists into his government. In May 1947 these communist infiltrators successfully staged a coup. They came to power after forcing Nagy to go into exile. They systematically eliminated all opponents and opposition parties including the popular Catholic primate, Cardinal Mindszenty, in 1949 and established a “People’s Republic”. The Hungarian communist leaders adopted a communist constitution and established close links with the Soviet Union.

## Czechoslovakia

After World War II, Czechoslovakia adopted the pre-war republican and democratic constitution. The people elected Eduard Benes as president. He appointed a coalition cabinet which wanted to maintain friendly relations with the democratic West and the Soviet Union. In May 1946 elections were held and the communists did not gain any noticeable majority. However, the Soviet Union applied pressure on the President and he was forced to appoint Klement Gottwald as premier. Klement Gottwald was a Moscow-trained communist and an ex-member of the Comintern. In 1948 he overthrew the republican government with the support of the Soviet Union and established his dictatorship. During the next year many anti-communists were imprisoned. The new communist government adopted a communist constitution. Gottwald was succeeded by Antonin Zapotocky as premier in 1949. Subsequently, he became the president of the country.

## East Germany

The Red Army occupied East Germany and East Berlin even after the war. These forces were not withdrawn and they sponsored a civil government to be managed by a "Socialist Unity Party". This party was composed of East German communists and left wing socialists. In October 1949, Russia proclaimed the formation of "German Democratic Republic" in Soviet-controlled East Germany. This was partly in response to the action of the Western Allies who had established a Federal Republic of Germany (in West Germany) in 1948. Wilhelm Pieck became the titular President of the GDR. Otto Grotewohl and Walter Ulbricht became the premier and deputy premier respectively. The Soviet Union riveted her control over the GDR effectively. Thus the reunification of Germany became a thorny issue on account of superpower rivalry.

As the United States of America dominated over the western countries, similarly the Soviet Union established her complete control over her satellite countries in Eastern Europe. The ideological conflict between the two superpowers continued unabated with ominous portents for the world.

## Decolonisation of Asia, Africa and the Middle East

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The greatest thing that happened to the world after World War II was decolonisation. There was a transfer of power from the imperial powers of the West to the people of the colonies of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The process of decolonisation was initiated by Britain and France and followed by other imperial powers.

Peoples living in these three regions had been demanding self-rule or independence ever since the conclusion of World War I. They found that the imperial powers had become weak after the war and put pressure on them by means of political agitations and revolts. The western imperial powers yielded to some extent and gave the subject nations some kind of self-government. A typical example was India. However, the people of the colonies were not satisfied and they demanded and agitated for full

independence.

In addition to the political agitations going on in the colonies during the forties and fifties of this century, what compelled the imperial powers to finally grant independence was the enormous havoc caused by World War II upon their national economies. Colonies became burdensome, both politically and economically. Therefore the process of decolonisation started soon after the war. Although in a majority of cases the process of decolonisation was peaceful, in some it was violent (Indonesia, North Vietnam and Algeria). By 1960 a major part of the colonial world became free from their erstwhile colonial masters. The process of decolonisation can be observed in three main phases. The first phase began from 1944 to 1949, a period during which many countries situated in the southern flanks of Asia became free and independent. They were Syria, Israel, Lebanon, India, Burma, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia and the Philippines. During the period of the second phase (1950 to 1956), a few colonies like Libya, Morocco and Tunisia became independent in a peaceful manner. However, the Algerians waged a war of independence which ended in their liberation in 1961. During the period of the third phase (from 1956 to 1963) many colonies in Africa became independent, namely, Sudan, Ghana Guinea, all French colonies, British Nigeria and Belgian Congo.

## Suggested Reading

1. Ward, Barbara, *The West at Bay*.
2. Rostow, W. W., *The Stages of Economic Growth*.
3. Lukacs, John, *Decline and Rise of Europe*.
4. Carrie, Albrecht R., *One Europe*.
5. Macmillan, Harold, *The Middle Way: Twenty Years After*.
6. Smith, H. K., *The State of Europe*.

## Europe Since the Seventies

After the Berlin and Cuban crises, Europe seemed to have entered into a new era, sometimes described as *detente*. It meant that the Cold War had ceased and a new age of cooperation had set in. But the cessation of Cold War did not really mean that the two power blocs had cancelled their military pacts. On the contrary they seemed to have taken it for granted that these military pacts had come to stay and they offered the best protection possible for their respective members. One may say that *detente* between the two power blocs did not come about suddenly, but developed gradually. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's methods and the steps taken to destalinise Russia offered better hope for the world in general and Western powers in particular. It appeared that East - West relations would definitely improve and the East European countries felt happy at the prospect of liberalism. The superpower rivalry along with the armament race continued, but with an understanding that the two should respect each other's spheres of influence as they stood at that time. With this basic understanding the two superpowers signed agreements, the most important being the renunciation of nuclear tests in the atmosphere or space in 1963 and the non-proliferation treaty in 1968. These two agreements led to a better understanding and paved the way for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in November 1969, nuclear test banning from the seabed, the Berlin Agreement of 1972 and finally the Helsinki Agreement (European Security Conference) in 1975. Thus the foundation of *detente* had been laid with the above agreements and it was up to the superpowers and their allies to decide how far they would go to maintain the spirit and substance of *detente*.

Detente between the two power blocs brought relaxation of

international tension which in turn led to "splintering process". With national security no longer in danger, each country in Europe began to look forward to an era of economic well-being. They began to follow certain policies which were strictly in their national interest, and hardly bothered whether they were in defiance of their military or commercial partners. For example, members of NATO were divided on issues of nuclear policy and the future of the alliance. France opposed the other five members of the European Common Market by blocking the admission of Britain into that body. Again France under De Gaulle kept herself out of NATO in 1966.

Similarly, some of the leaders of Russia's satellite countries in Eastern Europe took advantage of the growing rift between Russia and China and wrenched some concessions from the former. These countries bought foodgrains from France, Australia, Canada and United States. Under De Gaulle's inspiration, Rumania tried to establish her independence from the Soviet control. Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary looked to the West for help in importing various commodities and advanced technology in exchange for their raw materials. The West European countries eagerly looked forward to a brisk trade with their eastern counterparts on account of the easing of international tension. France under De Gaulle took the lead and followed policies strictly consistent with national interest, and in course of time dominated western Europe. Unfortunately, Britain led by a conservative government "drifted and dithered" and subsequently was succeeded by a very weak labour government.

## **Britain**

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The conservatives came into power after winning the October 1951 elections and they denationalised the steel and long-distance trucking industries. Richard Butler, the new Chancellor of Exchequer, introduced a series of measures to improve domestic consumption and balance of payments position. The conservatives were returned to power with greater majority in the 1955 election. Churchill had resigned on account of ill-health and therefore the conservative government was led by Sir Anthony Eden. Under his leadership Britain tried to maintain an

independent nuclear deterrent, despite costs and protests, national health service and defence commitments abroad. All this imposed a heavy burden on her economy which was already in the red. Eden's government fell due to the mishandling of Suez war in 1956 and America's opposition. The war waged against Egypt proved that Britain was no longer a world power. After Eden's resignation in 1957, Harold Macmillan became the prime minister for six years (1957-1963). Although Macmillan provided an efficient government and ushered in an era of prosperity, Britain had traditions which proved very burdensome. She could not reconcile herself to the fact that she was no longer a great power. It must be remembered that she was a nuclear power with nuclear arsenal. But subsequently, she found that she was unable to keep pace with the USA and USSR in nuclear arms and "the changing technology of delivery systems". She tried to launch a programme to develop "Blue Streak" missiles but gave it up in 1960. She signed an agreement with the USA by which she provided a base in Scotland to US submarines in return for the American made "Skybolt" missiles for her own nuclear defence. It became evident in 1962 that Britain was unable to maintain her position as a nuclear power and consequently relied upon US assistance. Her helplessness became increasingly evident when the United States cancelled the manufacture of Skybolts. President Kennedy tried to pacify the outraged feelings of the British government by offering to sell American-made Polaris missiles at Nassau. The offer added insult to injury.

Britain's position in world trade became precarious. She was faced with adverse balance of payments, and the writing on the wall was clear. She had to stem the tide of her economic deterioration. She tried to accomplish this by seeking her admission into the European Common Market, despite the opposition from the commonwealth countries. Macmillan hoped that there would not be any obstacle to Britain's entry but France under De Gaulle blocked the entry of Britain in January 1963. The allies of Britain in the ECM could do little to help except sympathise with Britain's plight. The popularity of Macmillan began to decline on the issue of Britain's entry into the ECM, which he was vociferously advocating, because he alienated the sympathies of Commonwealth countries on one hand, and the British farmers and the Labour Party on

the other. The British farmers were apprehensive because the price-support to farm products given by the government would ultimately depend upon its bargaining at Brussels (ECM headquarters).

Macmillan's government had the misfortune of being rocked by a series of sex and security scandals. In 1962, a junior clerk in the Admiralty who was a homosexual was arrested for spying for the Soviet Union. An enquiry report revealed that security procedures adopted were faulty. Following this scandal came another which was far more serious, and directly involved Macmillan's government. In March 1963 John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, admitted in Parliament his acquaintance with Miss Christine Keeler, a prostitute. After persistent questioning in the House of Commons he further admitted to having an affair with her and that she tried to extract information out of him (during the time of Cuban missile crisis) to pass it on to a Naval Attaché in the Russian embassy. Profumo resigned but this incident caused great damage to the credibility of the conservative government. Many members of the Conservative Party lost confidence in Macmillan who resigned giving reason of ill-health. He was succeeded by Sir Alec Douglas Home (Foreign Secretary in Macmillan's cabinet). Public opinion polls in 1964 indicated a swing of votes towards the Labour party. It was at that time that the Labour Party's obvious choice for leading the party became Harold Wilson. The general election in October 1964 resulted in unseating the conservative government and bringing Labour party into power. The Labour party had won with a narrow margin—a majority of five seats. Harold Wilson, the Labour party leader, who formed the government had to depend upon nine Liberal Party members for survival of his government. Surprisingly, on the day the Labour Party won (October 15th), Khrushchev fell from power in Russia.

Despite the narrow margin of victory Harold Wilson tried to hold his party together and gave the impression to the people that he is confident of overcoming all obstacles and providing clean and efficient government. He hoped to modernise the British economy and trade union system. Unfortunately, a financial crisis started in the face of his government (the stability of the pound-sterling was threatened) leading to failure in accomplishing these two things. His majority in the House was further reduced (from 13 to 2) and he used this opportunity to warn

his own colleagues from taking untenable positions. Inflation could not be checked as long as the government maintained the high costs of defence, health and pension, services and education. Trade had slumped and the pound-sterling was in the red. Large-scale borrowing from abroad did not ease the financial situation. After the seamen's strike in Britain the pound had to be devalued to \$2.40 in November 1967. The labour government followed it up by other measures to bolster the sterling such as wage freeze and so on. But all attempts failed on account of trade union opposition and left-wing militancy. The labour government of Harold Wilson was unseated in 1970.

The succeeding conservative government did not improve the situation. It worsened the conditions by abolishing some of the measures adopted by the previous government about labour. Finally it had to implement restraints on income policy. The trade unions resisted the moves. Conditions deteriorated when Industrial Relations Act imposed wage and price controls. In 1972 a coal miners' strike took place which resulted in the power shortage. Thus all attempts to curb inflation were foiled by the stickers which ultimately led the government to introduce a three-day working week to save fuel. In the 1974 election the conservative government was replaced by the Labour party government. The industrial unrest in Britain resulted in the loss of value of the British pound. The escalation in costs and wages increased the number of unemployed. More than a million unemployed men in Britain caused great concern to the government. In 1972 the Irish Republican Army carried out its terrorist activities against the government which led to the direct rule of Northern Ireland. In 1973 President Georges Pompidou of France permitted Britain and two other countries to join the European Common Market.

The decision of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase the oil price by four or five times in 1973—this was done to chastise Western countries for supporting Israel—had serious repercussions on the world economy, particularly Europe.

In February 1974 elections, the Labour Party secured parliamentary majority and Harold Wilson formed the cabinet with a promise 'to get the economy right'. He ended the miners strike by giving them increased wages and the three-day-week was discontinued. Due to increased

wages the British goods became dearer compared with European counterparts and this resulted in adverse balance of trade. Secondly, inefficient management too contributed to the slump in British trade in international market, and the government had to adopt 'Stop-go' policy which checked the tempo of industrial activities. Wilson resigned in April 1975 on grounds of health, and the succeeding Callaghan ministry could do no better. At a time when there was high rate of inflation, Denis Healey, the chancellor of exchequer, introduced a 'tough budget' which included reduction in defence spending, increase in VAT (value added tax), higher income tax, wage-increase limit to six pounds a week and so on, and by these measures the annual inflation rate came down to 10 per cent in 1978 (24 per cent in 1975). There was balance of payment surplus. The referendum held in Britain showed that a majority of the British desired Britain to continue her membership in the European Common Market (ECM).

The labour majority in British Parliament became wafer-thin and Mr Callaghan had to seek support of the Liberal Party to remain in power. The labour government survived for another two years. Mr Callaghan got into trouble with the trade unions for his proposal to extend the social contract and made a premature announcement of next elections. His wrong judgement cost the Labour party dearly and the conservatives formed the next government under Mrs Margaret Thatcher, daughter of a Grantham grocer and wife of an industrialist.

Her 11 years 7 months rule over Britain (1979-1990) constituted a most momentous period in British history. She had earlier worked as minister of Education and Health under Edward Heath. Her vigorous style of functioning took many by surprise and people called her the Iron Lady. She was very much influenced by the writings of famous American economist, Milton Friedman, who said that socialism comes in the way of individual initiatives and freedom, and monetary approach is the right approach to restore the health of a country's economy.

She denounced labour unions and called strikes as "a reversion to barbarism". She chose Geoffrey Howe as Chancellor of Exchequer. Her tough economic measures brought down the rate of inflation to about ten per cent. The deepening recession engulfing the world wrought havoc of British economy with a large number of private companies closing. There

were riots in the summer of 1981 in Liverpool, London and Manchester. The tory left wingers criticised her policies. Uncompromising and defiant, Thatcher dismissed a few of them from her cabinet and appointed Cecil Parkinson and Norman Tebbit. Her party lost a few seats in the by-elections. It was at this juncture when millions were unemployed in Britain, there emerged a new party called the Social Democrat Party (SDP). The SDP formed an alliance with the Liberals.

Margaret Thatcher was at her best when a political crisis forced Britain to fight Argentina. Argentina invaded Falkland islands (situated in the South Atlantic) on 2 April, 1982. On these rocky islands there were about 1,800 islanders and they were loyal to Britain. When the Security Council condemned Argentina for this act and demanded withdrawal of her forces from the islands, the latter refused. With the blessings of President Reagan, Margaret Thatcher ordered 70 British ships carrying 6,000 British troops to throw out the aggressors. The British Navy went into action and captured the islands after sinking many Argentinian ships including an old Argentinian Cruiser, *General Belgrano*, which was carrying the exotic missiles. Hundreds were drowned when this cruiser was hit and Mrs. Thatcher came in for criticism in Parliament for not going to the rescue of those drowning. The cost of recovering this barren island, after Argentinian surrender, proved disastrous to British economy. It cost a whopping £700 million. There were 254 British casualties. Margaret Thatcher boosted her otherwise sagging popularity amidst patriotic fervour.

In the 1983 general elections, the Labour party had an advantage, since three million Britons were unemployed, but certain other conditions favoured Thatcher's victory, particularly the coming down of the rate of inflation (at four per cent). The Employment Act favoured the workers, and privatisation of national industries happened to be a bold step in the right direction. The victory in the Falkland War gave Mrs Thatcher immense advantage and factions in the Labour party could not come to agreement on the issue of withdrawal of Britain from the European Common Market. The saving grace was Neil Kinnock, a dynamic leader, who replaced Michael Foot as the leader of the Labour Party.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher had never been ideologically committed to

Europe and quarrelled over Britain's financial contribution to the European Community. Subsequently she adopted the attitude that Britain had a separate identity, and that by integrating herself with European Community she would suffer from cultural void. She denounced the "Social Charter" of the EC nations as "socialist charter" and was afraid that if Britain got politically and economically integrated with the EC, the Germans would dominate. Her minister and friend, Nicholas Ridley, had to lose his job when he revealed her mind.

The dramatic fall of Mrs Thatcher came in November 1990 and it must be remembered that she was the first prime minister to get elected for three terms in the previous 160 years of British history. Before she made her exit she established contacts with the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, improved defence forces with the assistance of US, agreed to hand over Hong Kong to Communist China by 1997, and maintained friendly relations with Soviet President Gorbachev. During the last year of her tenure of office, she turned uncompromising in her stand on many issues, particularly with regard to the EC, and sacked Geoffrey Howe (Foreign Secretary) and appointed relatively a newcomer John Major in his place. Lawson, the Chancellor of Exchequer, was forced to resign. Thatcher was uncompromising over poll tax. She lost the confidence of many members of her party and this emboldened Michael Heseltine to declare himself candidate for the leadership of the party. Thatcher was forced to resign when she failed to gain sufficient majority. Her supporters cast their votes in favour of John Major who became prime minister on November 29, 1990.

## West Germany (FRG)

West Germany provided a picture of contrast with Britain. The early 1960s witnessed political stability and economic recovery. Despite this, West Germany appeared weak and disappointed. Firstly, her hopes of reunification with East Germany appeared remote. The Russians would not allow this to happen. She could not reconcile herself to the fact of permanent division of the country and also that her counterpart had ceded territories to Poland and Russia. On her part she refused to recognise the territorial claims of Poland and Russia. Her borders

remained undefined.

Meanwhile, the West Germans had to go through the legacy of the past—the trial of Nazi criminals. Many who were caught were tried and sentenced and the rest sentenced *in absentia*. The trial of Adolf Eichmann – a Nazi criminal who was responsible for the massacre of millions of Jews – in Israel in 1961 reminded her of her sullied past.

The Bonn Republic progressed rapidly under the able leadership of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. He turned 80 in 1956 but his dynamism in home and foreign policies continued. His popularity did not sag even in the early sixties. West Germany was fortunate in having a two-party system, the Christian Democrats occupying the right centre, and the Social Democrats the left centre. The Social Democrats who always remained powerful in local politics improved their chances at the national level by breaking with their Marxist past in November 1959. They gave up many of their traditional or political ideologies and found a young and dynamic leader in the Mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt.

The end of the Adenauer era came in 1963 on account of a political crisis. The German voters elected a Bundestag in 1961 in which no party received a clear majority. This put Adenauer in a peculiarly awkward position because he always sought the assistance of the Christian Social Union to maintain himself in power. That was not to be this time and therefore Adenauer took the help of Erich Mende, the leader of the Free Democrats. The latter agreed but on one condition, that Adenauer should lead the country for no more than two years. Adenauer agreed. This coalition almost came to an end over the *Der Spiegel* episode. Franz Josef Strauss, the head of the Christian Social Union, who had joined Adenauer's cabinet as Minister of Defence, got annoyed with the editor of an opposition weekly magazine, *Der Spiegel*, which had published an article on Strauss' policies. He roughed up its editorial staff. Subsequently the whole affair blew over when Strauss resigned and the chancellor also agreed to resign within a year. Adenauer resigned in 1963 and was succeeded by a pleasant and "cigar smoking Bavarian, named Ludwig Erhard". Before his resignation Adenauer had signed a treaty with France which ushered in a new era of Franco-West German friendship.

Ludwig Erhard has been described as "miracle worker of Germany's post-war economic recovery". His economic policies at home kept the

Germans prosperous and happy. Unfortunately, his brilliant achievements on the domestic scene could not match with his foreign and defence policies. He was found to be more pro-American and less pro-French which made De Gaulle cancel the treaty of friendship signed with West Germany. His pro-American policy did not reward him in the sense that he could not secure for Germany some control over nuclear weapons kept on her soil to bolster German defence. Inflationary pressures began to mount but Erhard was against government intervention. All this made him unpopular. Despite this the Christian Democrats won the 1965 general elections. The voters probably felt that the Social Democrats under Willy Brandt would not provide a suitable alternative.

They were also influenced to some extent by the official visit of the prime minister of Poland to France. This event scared West Germans into believing that France may also recognise Poland's annexation of German territories. They forgot about the grievances they had against Erhard and voted his party to power. As the Christian democrats did not receive absolute majority, Erhard formed a coalition with free democrats in 1961. Erhard's weak leadership and the unpredictability of the free Democrats (who joined the government as coalition partners) led to the formation of "Great Coalition". The Christian Democrats for the first time offered partnership to the Social Democrats in running the government. The Social Democrats under Willy Brandt who remained predominant in local politics, but somehow could not reach the top, saw in the offer a wonderful opportunity to broaden their political base. At considerable risk, the Social Democrats agreed, and Willy Brandt became foreign minister. Unfortunately Kiesinger's chancellorship did not produce desirable results at home or abroad. Germany remained isolated and her relations with the others including her eastern counterpart were not so good. This led to much frustration among the people in general and the Social Democrats in particular. In 1968 student demonstrations against the government added fuel to the fire at a time when the general election was fast approaching.

The Social Democrats took full advantage of the weakness of its coalition partner and campaigned vigorously. The most effective campaigner was the novelist, Gunter Grass. His discussions appeared

like fireside chats of President Truman and highly influenced the voters. When the results were announced the Christian Democrats with 46 per cent led (with the loss of three seats) but were unable to form a government without the help of Free Democrats. The Free Democrats were not interested in supporting them. They were prepared to join Brandt's Social Democrats if they formed the government. Thus in 1969 Willy Brandt became the chancellor, and the Social Democrats after remaining 40 years in opposition assumed power.

On assuming office, Willy Brandt grappled with the domestic and foreign policy problems most vigorously. He paved the way for Britain's entry into the European Common Market. He revalued the West German mark to indicate the soundness of the economy. He tried hard to improve relations with the East. He offered economic advantages to Polish and Soviet governments and hoped to end the ideological warfare. Brandt's policies overwhelmed the communist countries. Even Walter Ulbricht, the East German leader, felt the impact of Brandt's personality and his blandishments. This *Ostpolitik* – friendly overtures to the East – brought glory to Brandt. Brandt started negotiating with Moscow on the renunciation of force as a means of settling disputes between the two countries (1970). He followed it up with another agreement with Poland over the border problem. These two treaties were ratified by the Bundestag. Similarly, Willy Brandt conducted negotiations with East Germany over the normalisation of relations between the two countries and their eventual admission to the United Nations. The general election of 1972 caused some dismay to Willy Brandt but he overcame it through an appeal for a popular mandate. With free democrat partners he won a clear majority and formed the government.

But in the years ahead his policies which had won him so many accolades came to be critically reviewed. The people got the impression that their leader gave in too much to the communists without any reciprocity. His *Ostpolitik* was subjected to severe criticism. Many wanted to know whether he was strong enough to wrench concessions from Eastern and Western Allies. His political enemies were waiting for an opportunity to dethrone him. It came as expected. His fall came when it was known that in his entourage there was a spy. He resigned in 1974 and was succeeded by Helmut Schmidt, "a down-to-earth northerner

from Hamburg".

Helmut Schmidt tried to revive the glory of the Social Democrat Party by effectively dealing with the economic problems facing his country, particularly the recession (winter of 1974-75). The economic decline resulted in 12 millions remaining unemployed. He introduced several reflationary measures, including capital expenditure programme with the assistance of some German firms for the purpose of tackling unemployment problem. He succeeded in reducing the rate of inflation to under six per cent. The US and Western allies put pressure on him to import more goods and he had to give them some concessions. Among the economic measures which received warm welcome was the tax cut for individuals and businessmen. After holding the Economic Summit Conference in Bonn in 1978, he introduced a package of measures, as suggested at the summit meeting, for the purpose of achieving a better growth rate. The German currency, the mark, grew strong and held its position as against the American dollar.

The governing coalition (SDP and FDP) continued to function, after winning the election of October 1980 and Helmut Schmidt became chancellor for another term (1980-82). The combined coalition increased its margin of majority from 10 to 45 seats in the Bundestag (Lower House). Helmut Schmidt called for strengthening the Atlantic Alliance, the EC (the European Community), cooperation with the East, and arms control. In domestic matters, he called for 'budget restraint', less dependence on imported oil and reforms for modernisation. Schmidt's government was rocked by several scandals but the West German economy improved a great deal. It enjoyed high gold reserves, largest currency reserves, and highest exports in world trade, and an annual per capital income of \$,9278 in 1978.

There was political shift in 1982-83 when the Free Democrat Party left the Social Democrat Party and joined the Christian Democrats. It must be remembered that the FDP always held the balance of power in any formation of coalition government. When the FDP and CDU won the national election in 1983, Helmut Kohl got elected as the chancellor. Kohl selected Hans Dietrich Genscher of the FDP as his foreign minister who was a great advocate of detente. During the first term in office, Kohl did not appear to have managed things successfully, but when he got re-

elected in January 1987, he began to handle many problems of Germany successfully. West Germany always supported the Atlantic Alliance and a policy of detente, particularly with East Germany. After the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl (Soviet Union), Kohl set up an Environment Ministry to deal with all kinds of pollution.

Kohl favoured market economy, tax reduction and privatisation. The health of West German economy always depended upon exports. Under his able leadership West Germany made rapid strides of progress. The reunification of two sides of Germany was possible only through the efforts of Kohl, and this began with the visit of East German leader, Erich Honecker. On 9th November 1989, people pulled down the Berlin wall and the border between East and West Berlin disappeared after a gap of 28 years. Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika encouraged East Germans to merge their country with West Germany, and members of both Parliaments agreed on 20 September, 1990, that Germany would reunite with effect from October 3, 1990.

## France

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Charles de Gaulle's authoritarian regime gave a long respite to the troubled nation after years of political instability. In the early sixties de Gaulle achieved two main objectives: firstly, he brought the Algerian War to an end, secondly, France showed signs of maintaining political stability in the country.

Charles de Gaulle's approach to deal with the problem of Algeria lacked coherence. He allowed the problem to boil over and only when it threatened the political fabric did he react violently. He suppressed the agitations mercilessly. Then he started negotiations with rebels which made the Algerian-French suspicious of his intentions. They thought that the General would sell them out to the Algerian rebels. Charles de Gaulle's 'clumsy' handling of this problem "followed a zigzag course which alternated military action with vague conciliatory gestures and ended by confusing both his friends and enemies" which was disliked by the conservatives and the nationalists. Finally, he solved the problem by granting unconditional liberation, a thing which nobody in France thought de Gaulle would do.

Meanwhile, France was disturbed by the increasing violence resorted to by the nationalists. In April 1961 military leaders in French Algiers rose in revolt. But de Gaulle suppressed it with utmost rigour. Many rebellious elements then resorted to making attempts on his life which he miraculously escaped. Convinced that in the event of his untimely death France would witness chaos, de Gaulle hoped to avert this by having a new constitutional amendment. He proposed this new amendment through his Prime Minister George Pompidou. The amendment provided for popular election of president, and when it was proposed, the Pompidou ministry was voted out of office. The president responded to this reaction in the Assembly by dissolving it and called for fresh elections. The election was a kind of referendum which the President wanted, namely, the desirability of the constitutional amendment. The election results showed enough majority for de Gaulle to get the amendment passed. But his opponents trenchantly criticised his foreign policy which included contempt for the UNO, refusal to support NATO allies, politicking in the ECM and anti-American stance. However, the election victory proved that a majority of voters were least bothered about the President's so called lapses.

From 1962 President de Gaulle followed what is described as nationalist policies. Like Napoleon, he wanted France to take its legitimate place as leader of Europe. He was encouraged by Khrushchev's backing out on Cuban Missile Crisis and the humiliation meted out to Prime Minister Macmillan at Nassau at the hands of President Kennedy. He began to assert France's independence on arriving at decisions over many issues. He blocked the entry of Britain into the European Common Market in January 1963. He declined to sign the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Unmindful of others he accorded diplomatic recognition to communist China and refused to pay the agreed charges for UN peacekeeping operations. At a time when Britain was facing a serious financial crisis and the US, a drain on its gold reserves, de Gaulle advised them on how to manage such things. He criticised the collusion of Britain and US, in maintaining "gold-exchange standard" and asked them to abandon this scheme. His ideas and actions certainly checked temporarily the "dollar invasion" of Europe. He received a visit from West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, and

signed a treaty of friendship. To some extent he succeeded in checking German dependence on American military support. He advocated self-reliance among the West European countries at a time when they were looking for American military and financial support. He asserted that by geography and tradition France alone can afford to give protection to her European neighbours. After Adenauer's resignation his successor did not support the French President and therefore the latter adopted several measures to punish the former, and on failing in many, he offered blandishments. He even promised to see that the two Germanys were reunited without the help of the USA. He expressed a wish for founding a new currency exclusively for Europe. He advised Erhard to abandon a German-American plan for Germany's nuclear defence. He assured Europe that France would act as guarantor for the good behaviour of Germany, and Russia would become friendly with all Europeans.

Many in France did not share the General's vision of European unity under French leadership in 1965. They were deeply hurt and disappointed at his authoritarianism. In the 1965 presidential election the General's rivals expressed their opinion that the General was not indispensable to France. They rallied round Francois Mitterrand and got ready to replace the ageing hero. But the French indicated in the election that they wanted de Gaulle to continue. With reduced majority de Gaulle assumed office for the second term which was to run for seven years. Master of *Realpolitik*, de Gaulle was a leader *par excellence*. Two years later the federation of the left led by Mitterrand further reduced his majority in a parliamentary election but de Gaulle was not perturbed.

Charles de Gaulle's popularity was waning not only at home but also abroad. He again blocked the entry of Britain into the ECM, stopped military assistance to Israel, embarrassed the Canadian government by speaking to the dissidents there on his official visit. In May 1968 a student's revolt broke out at Nantarnre after their long standing grievances remained neglected. They demanded reforms to improve their conditions and in the examination system. Violence spread in the French capital with the workers also joining the students. Charles de Gaulle went on an official visit to Rumania without giving instructions on how to deal with the problem. When disturbances broke out again he returned. The disturbances continued unabated and everybody expected

that the General would resign and would be succeeded by Mitterrand. To teach a lesson to the students and workers who were not listening to reason, de Gaulle prepared for a showdown. After assuring himself of the loyalty of army commanders, he proclaimed the dissolution of the Assembly and called for fresh elections within a month. He appealed to loyal citizens to show their faith in him by rallying round him. In response to his call for fresh elections he took all his opponents by surprise and by June the students and workers agitation subsided. In mid-June agitating students were cleared out of university premises. At the month-end, the general election resulted in a thumping majority for the supporters of de Gaulle. The Communists were the only ones who retained their position. The others, particularly the Federation of the Left, faced terrible losses.

Despite this, de Gaulle's regime came to an end. On the domestic front the wage increase to workers resulted in a heavy burden on the exchequer. His efforts to appease the students went on slowly. The General was not prepared to devalue the franc as recommended by his close advisors. In 1969, the General proposed a referendum on his plan to reorganise the French administration on a regional basis. He thought it would cure many ills but his opponents and vested interests took it as a challenge. At this point the General declared that the referendum would be considered as a vote of confidence in him. He warned the people of the impending chaos if they failed him. When the result of the referendum was announced his proposal lost by a narrow margin of votes. The haughty General took it as an affront and promptly resigned. Thus ended the era of de Gaulle. His successor was Georges Pompidou who assumed office nine months later after defeating a united left (which had fought tooth and nail against de Gaulle in the previous referendum.)

The new President had a large backing and he invited non-Gaullists also to join the government. He did not assume as large a role as his great predecessor had done but in his own humble way conducted diplomacy with foreign powers. Pompidou permitted Britain to enter the ECM. He devalued the franc by 12.5 per cent. France lost its predominance in European affairs replaced by Willy Brandt's West Germany. In another four years Pompidou's popularity declined. He died in 1974 and was succeeded by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, the leader of the independents

and other groups.

## The French Politics

By 1974 France had become the fifth highly industrialised nation enjoying a high standard of living. Giscard d'Estaing's victory over Francois Mitterrand was wafer thin and he owed his election victory to a young and ambitious gaullist, Jacques Chirac. Giscard made Chirac his premier but the two did not agree on many matters and Chirac manoeuvred to capture the gaullist party leadership and expected the President to toe his line. Chirac resigned in 1976 and the President appointed an apolitical economist name Raymond Barre. Raymond Barre prepared an economic plan (the Plan Barre) in 1976 which aimed at "convergence and readjustment of French economy".

The main economic problem facing the country was the high rate of inflation caused by the hike in oil prices, and the plan tried to tackle many other problems too and hoped to stabilise the value of the French franc. The plan tried to reduce the foreign trade deficit and designed an austerity programme to restore the health of French economy. It met with partial success, but businessmen and factory workers violently reacted to it. Jacques Chirac joined the protesters saying that it hindered economic growth. Chirac got elected as mayor of Paris after defeating the President's candidate which greatly added to his personal importance in French politics. He warned France that if Giscard continued as President till 1981 there would be constitutional crisis, and if the worst came to the worst, Giscard would have to choose Mitterrand (left socialist) as his premier. The energy crisis compelled France to link its franc with the German mark, and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany played a crucial role in strengthening the European Monetary system and its new currency, the ECU (European Currency Unit).

France followed an independent foreign policy in tune with the Gaullist tradition, which was at variance with rest of the Allies, especially the UK and the US. When the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, France joined the Allies in condemning but did not participate in the meeting of foreign ministers. She refused to join the boycott of the Olympics to be held in Moscow and also impose economic sanctions. France tried to be close to Israel and opened discussions with the PLO and Arab states. Ties

with Iraq became closer since France needed oil, and in return prepared to sell nuclear facilities. Giscard was concerned about some African states which were coming under Soviet influence, particularly Libya and Angola. France maintained close ties with sub-Saharan states and provided economic assistance. French troops were in action to protect Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Gabon and Djibouti. The French troops also went into action in Mauritania, Chad, Tunisia to protect them from Libya's threats.

In the 1981 general elections, Francois Mitterrand, the Socialist leader, was elected the French President after defeating Giscard d'Estaing and the Gaullist era thus came to an end. Known to the French as the 'Florentine', Mitterrand had been in politics since the conclusion of the Second World War, and in 1971, became the leader of the socialists. He earned his fame for political astuteness and adopted the socialist methods to solve the economic problems of the nation. In other words, he desired 'rupture with capitalism' by taking recourse to nationalisation of industries. When he tried this in the early years of his presidency, problems turned worse with national debt and unemployment increasing. He abandoned his socialist measures and introduced measures of economic austerity during the period 1983-86. In the meantime, Chirac, the leader of the RPR (Reassemblment pour la Republique) and the centre-right, captured majority of the seats in the National Assembly and formed a government (the French Constitution permits this pluralism) and pursued policies which had nothing in common with those of the President. The situation forced Mitterrand to have what is called 'cohabitation', a political experiment in running the government with the help of centre rightist for nearly two years (1986-88). This cohabitation which sometimes created chaos in the activities of the government ended in June 1988 after the re-election of Mitterrand for another term of seven years. Chirac, who also ran as a Presidential candidate, failed to convince the French and lost, of course, in the second round. Chirac tendered his resignation and a new government of socialists with the help of some centrists was formed with Michael Record as Prime Minister.

In defence matters Mitterrand followed an independent policy in the true tradition of Gaullism, and kept France free from NATO's influence.

France believed in having an independent nuclear policy. In foreign policy, Mitterrand, after initial hesitation, decided to pledge support to the UN sanction against Iraq for invading Kuwait and also supported military action against her. The French forces participated in the Gulf War. France feverishly worked to bring about the "European Union" and in this aspect, the cooperation of reunited Germany became *conditio sine qua non* (an indispensable condition). Earlier she was afraid of German reunification.

Among the domestic problems faced by Mitterrand during his last term (1988-95) was unemployment and rise of xenophobia. The latter was whipped up by the Front National Party led by an extremist right movement leader, Jean Marie Le Pen. Political scandals rocked the government. Edith Cresson, the controversial prime minister, tendered her resignation after the socialists lost municipal and other elections. Mitterrand was succeeded by Jacques Chirac as the French President in May 1995.

## The USSR (also Russian Federation)

Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin and the subsequent period of destalinisation heralded many things to the outside world. The East European countries under the grip of Russia eagerly looked forward to the easing of many restrictions. The western countries hoped that the Cold War had come to an end and looked forward to the possibility of good relations with Russia. Khrushchev extended economic aid to the developing countries of Asia and Africa. He hoped to defeat the West by competition rather than by war. He tried persuasion as well as rough methods with the satellite countries to toe Russia's line towards socialism. All appeared to go well. However, a number of articles appeared in the Chinese press attacking Khrushchev's foreign policy. They all condemned Khrushchev for adopting a soft attitude towards the West and thereby forsaking the traditional principles of communism. China called him a traitor to the communist cause. Khrushchev retaliated by condemning China's suicidal policy which began the Sino-Soviet conflict. Except Albania, all the satellites of Russia supported Khrushchev's policies.

Khrushchev's failures began to increase. The Cuban Missile crisis brought the two superpowers on the brink of war. President Kennedy's threat buckled Khrushchev. Russia was forced to withdraw missiles from Cuba. On the domestic front Khrushchev's policies in the party's internal politics caused great dismay. Party members were unhappy with his handling of Soviet agriculture which failed. Younger members of the party were more polished and educated and looked with contempt at the boorish behaviour of Khrushchev. Khrushchev's subordinates were unhappy at his crude handling of affairs and his shake-up of factory managements. The year 1963 proved disastrous for Soviet agriculture when Russia had to buy foodgrains from abroad. Within the communist party itself many liberals and Stalinists questioned his claim to leadership. After nine years in power Khrushchev was dismissed by the executive committee members of his party in October 1964. He was succeeded by Alexei Kosygin and Leonid Brezhnev (prime minister and Party Secretary respectively). They were experienced party bureaucrats. The new leaders brought about important organisational changes in both the party and government. They abolished "two-fold division of the party into agricultural and industrial wings". They abolished regional economic councils. They continued Khrushchev's 'consumerist' policies. Both these leaders tried to bury the hatchet with communist China. Unfortunately they found out that there were deep ideological differences between the two countries on the practice of communism. The Russian leaders believed that world communism can be achieved without recourse to global or nuclear war while the Chinese believed otherwise. The gap began to widen between the two countries. Like Khrushchev the Soviet leaders believed in competitive existence with capitalism.

Soviet influence began to decline in Eastern Europe during the era of Khrushchev. Romania, for example, followed an independent path despite angry protests from the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia was the first to leave the Soviet bloc, in 1950, under the leadership of President Tito. East European satellites of Russia like Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Rumania tried to follow independent policies, much to Russia's displeasure. Then purges followed in these countries. After Stalin's death the Russian leaders permitted some degree of

autonomy to these satellite countries particularly in domestic policies. In Hungary people revolted against the oppressive regime of the communist government and made attempts to be free from the Soviet domination in October 1956. But in November, Soviet troops and tanks marched into the Hungarian capital and mercilessly executed the rebels. There was a worldwide condemnation of the Soviet Union for its atrocities. The pressure of world opinion forced Soviet Union deal cautiously with a similar attempt made by Poland. The arrested Polish leader, Gomulka, was released in 1954. He was spearheading the liberal movement when in 1956 things came to a climax. Khrushchev no longer tolerated Gomulka's drift and wanted to punish him and his followers. He flew to Warsaw to cajole Gomulka to fall in line with the Soviet dictates. But the Polish leader stood firm. Khrushchev finally relented. The Poles elected their 'national' communist leader, Gomulka, which was approved by the Soviet Union. Poland did not fall in line with other East European countries in the field of agriculture. She retained her private agriculture while her neighbours went for collectivisation.

Thus the liberalisation process which began during the days of Soviet Prime Minister Malenkov up to the Khrushchev period continued. Czechoslovakia had no doubt made remarkable progress in industrialisation and remained one of the progressive communist countries of Eastern Europe. She had been an ardent follower of the Soviet Union till 1968 when Alexander Dubcek became the leader. He tried many liberal reforms to improve the economy which were not approved by the Soviet leadership. Although Dubcek was loyal to the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet leadership, the Soviet leaders dubbed him, a renegade and decided to punish him. The other Warsaw Pact countries also criticised him and put pressure on him to toe the line of Moscow. Dubcek did not yield. The Soviet leader Kosygin visited Czechoslovakia and met Dubcek. The Warsaw Pact countries sent troops to crush the movement in August 1968.

There was no resistance worth mentioning from the Czechs but they were not happy when leaders including Dubcek were arrested. They were taken to Moscow but the Soviet leaders could not find a suitable substitute to replace Dubcek. After a few months Dubcek and his followers were released. The Czech leader agreed to normalise the

situation and dismiss a few liberals. That was how the Soviet leaders were pacified. Dubcek was succeeded by Gustav Husak in 1969. The Soviet leader, Brezhnev, defended the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact countries on grounds of "Brezhnev doctrine" which was enunciated in November 1968. He said if "Socialism" was threatened in any country (wedded to socialism), it became "not only a problem of the people of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all Socialist countries".

During the Brezhnev era the Soviet government soft-pedalled on the process of destalinisation. Brezhnev adopted a more liberal approach to the economic problems facing the nation, and permitted a limited number of private enterprises to thrive. He permitted the production of more consumer goods and looked forward to improve the standard of living.

It was believed that the world oil crisis of 1973 would not affect the Soviet Union since she had one of the largest reserves on this front, but her agriculture failed. Hence she had to import a large amount of foodgrains from the Western countries after supplying energy resources to them. Out of the revenue obtained, the Soviet Union spent much of it on its military industrial complex. It was not until the late 1970s that Soviet policy-makers began to think of alternative sources of energy, particularly electricity generated through nuclear reactors. But they began to face many production problems with regard to the manufacture of nuclear reactors.

The Soviet Union witnessed dissidence from some intellectuals, and the political leaders did not take it kindly. The dissidents included Sharansky (a great Mathematician) and Andrei Shakharov (the great Physicist). The state treated them harshly and the KGB (Russian Secret Service) persecuted them and their followers.

The final act of putting an end to the Cold War between the superpowers came with the Helsinki Agreement, signed by 35 nations (of Europe and America). The Soviet Union and her satellite countries by signing this agreement declared they were not interested in exporting communism to the Free World. But in 1979 the Soviet Union ordered her troops to invade Afghanistan for the purpose of setting up a puppet government of Babrak Kamal. This betrayal and several others made

President Reagan to describe the Soviet Union as the “focus of evil in the modern world”.

Leonid Brezhnev died in 1982, and during the next three years the Soviet Union witnessed the governance of Andropov and Chernenko. The economic stagnation which began during the Brezhnev era became much worse. The Soviet agriculture failed to deliver the goods and the country faced shortage of food. Its import became essential. Prices of essential commodities went up. The Soviet Union which had a command-economy manned by party bureaucrats was unable to cope with the problem of shortages felt by the people. Yuri Andropov believed that without the removal of the corrupt communist bureaucrats there was no hope of achieving modernisation.

## Gorbachev and the Crumbling of the Soviet Empire

The historic break with the past in the Soviet Union began with the assumption of Soviet leadership by Mikhail Gorbachev (a former mechanic of a tractor factory) in 1985. During his term of six years in office, the Soviet Union witnessed a second revolution, far more significant than the first one which occurred in 1917. The *Time* magazine declared Gorbachev as the “man of the decade”. What nobody in the Soviet Union could have thought of or imagined, Gorbachev was making it happen.

## Gorbachev’s Vision

Gorbachev realised that the Soviet Union could retain her superpower status in the world only at an enormous cost, a cost that would cause immense sufferings to the people. The economic stagnation that had engulfed the country had wrought havoc, and what the country needed was coming to terms with realities. His country needed a new ideological framework, a change in tune with the time, for carving a better future. Gorbachev tried to explain his vision through concepts— *Glasnost* (openness), *Perestroika* (restructuring, reforming and reviving a stagnant economy) and democracy. Wherever he met his people he asked them to push for change. He said change was necessary to transform a stagnant Soviet society through the programmes of *glasnost*, *perestroika* and

democracy. He knew changes should come from above and hence his tenure in office witnessed transformation in international, political and economic spheres, which many in the Soviet Union would have considered impossible to attain, just a couple of years ago.

## Perestroika

Many economic ills such as shortage of many goods (in spite of liberal imports), shortages of food in several regions, high inflation, high federal deficits, rising unemployment and foreign debt (100 billion roubles), began to overwhelm his government. Gorbachev realised that it would be better to end the old system of economy inherited from the past (the Stalinist centrally planned economic system) and bring about a market oriented economy. He desired to reduce the role of planners in decision-making as well as in state-owned enterprises, and in their place allow private and cooperative decision making. In simple words, this process is known as 'privatising and marketising socialism'. The diehard conservatives in his party opposed his reforms and therefore Gorbachev needed the people's support in the first place and the constitutional authority in the second place. Gorbachev reiterated on many occasions that unless glasnost and democratisation were accepted, perestroika would collapse. In a fiercely contested election that took place in March 1989, Gorbachev defeated his rivals and the Congress elected him as executive President. Thus armed with wide powers not only as General Secretary of the Communist Party, but also as Executive President, Gorbachev carried out reforms to lift the country out of economic stagnation. Unfortunately his sweeping reforms had little chance of success since people were unable to wait for long. Even though people had money to buy food and goods, they were in short supply.

## Soviet Foreign Policy

Gorbachev attracted the attention of the people of the whole world by introducing sweeping changes in the Soviet foreign policy. He lost no time in telling the world that the Soviet Union had no desire to spread communism to other countries. He rejected the Brezhnev doctrine and was ready to hold talks on reduction of armaments and destruction of nuclear weapons. In 1985, he met President Reagan of the US at the Geneva Summit (also called Superpower Summit) where both pledged not to wage nuclear or conventional wars. Gorbachev's 'new thinking' in foreign policy issues took the world by surprise. After announcing his contempt for the US star wars programme, Gorbachev offered wide concessions which put the US in a quandary. His bold initiatives to save the world from another nuclear holocaust took the US and her allies totally by surprise. In December 1989, President Bush responding to the initiatives of Gorbachev said, "Ours can be a future free both of tyranny and fear." Four summit meetings which were held between President Reagan and Gorbachev (Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington, and Moscow) till 1989 all brought about the end of Cold War and elimination of intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles. The most historic agreement was the one that was concluded in 1987 between the two superpowers, known as the INF Treaty (Intermediate-range Nuclear Force) which included the abolition of the use of specific nuclear weapons. The Soviet troops were pulled out of Afghanistan by 1989.

Gorbachev appealed for building of "a common European home" which would be free from fear and enjoy the benefits of economic integration. The confrontation between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries too ended. During the UN session which met to consider Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Soviet Union made frantic efforts to dissuade the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, from taking a position of confrontation. Gorbachev sent his personal envoy, Primakov, to persuade Saddam Hussein, to vacate his aggression, i.e., withdraw Iraqi troops from Kuwait, but Primakov's mission failed. The Soviet Union had to join other powers to vote for military action against Iraq. For the first time the two superpowers joined in an action to prevent a Third World War from

breaking out. The Soviet Union lost the close friendship of Iraq.

The loss of Eastern Europe, which was earlier in the Soviet orbit, was undoubtedly due to the demise of communism during the last years of Gorbachev's era. At the same time there was demise of the Warsaw Pact. Gorbachev was ready to end the Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe, for this would not only create better East – West relations, but also remove the burden (military and economic) from the shoulders of the Soviet Union. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) also came to an end in June 1991. Gorbachev's policy of losing Eastern Europe was very severely criticised, and his foreign minister, Shevardnadze had to resign. Gorbachev allowed Eastern European countries, all under communist rule, to go their own way. The Soviet troops were withdrawn from these countries.

## Gorbachev's Failure

Unfortunately Gorbachev could not create conditions for the success of his programme, perestroika. For nearly five years, he tried to urge people to accept it with some forbearance, since there was no easy way to transform a socialist economy of the Stalin-type into a market-oriented economy. Even the manner in which it was ushered in was sudden, and not in phases. Decrees, laws and ordinances had to be passed only to see that they could not be implemented due to some obstacles (November 1989 to July 1990). Confusion prevailed, and he dithered, and finally struck a compromise note. The pace of the reforms slowed, with some crucial reforms remaining unimplemented.

In the meantime, there was food shortage coupled with prices of several consumer goods going up. Poor production coupled with inadequate transport created terrible shortages in shops and stores. Even though people had money they could not buy. They lost their enthusiasm and interest in the perestroika. Workers' strike brought the economy to a grinding halt and even imports from foreign countries could not be distributed to people living in several regions. There was terrible chaos and the conservative idealogues took advantage of the situation and staged a coup on August 19, 1991. It failed due to the opposition of Boris Yeltsin, who rallied the support of the people in

Moscow in front of Parliament demanding the coup leaders to release Gorbachev whom they had kept confined.

Gorbachev's inability to control the situation during the last days of his administration was also partly due to fissiparous tendencies operating in the country. Gorbachev had no solution to offer to the nationality problem or ethnic riots. His advocacy of glasnost encouraged separatist tendencies to surface. His government could not take firm action when the people of Kazakhstan protested at the dismissal of their state's head in December 1986. The Balts and Crimean-tartars, who were subject to severe oppression during the days of Stalin, protested in Moscow and other cities. The Balts (the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) who enjoyed independence between the two World Wars demanded sovereign independent status for their states. They desired that their language should replace Russian language.

The worst ethnic crisis ever to happen in the Soviet Union took place in 1988 between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians over Nagorno Karabakh, and Armenian enclave in Azerbaijani territory. Soviet troops had to rush in to quell these ethnic riots. In the elections that took place in the Baltic Republics, the communists lost heavily and this event was followed by pro-independence movement. In 1989 fighting broke out between Uzbeks and Meshkatian-Turks in the Fargana Valley, and about 50,000 people had to be evacuated to safer places. There were other ethnic clashes too. At the end of 1989, most of the Republics (15 in all) were in political turmoil. The nationwide miners strike added to the troubles of central government. The communist party in Lithuania decided to sever ties with the centre and declare independence from the Centre communist party. Gorbachev could not take firm steps since he was afraid of international opinion. He imposed economic sanctions but it came to nothing because other republics went to her rescue.

The movements for independence in the Soviet Union affected the Russian Republic too, and Boris Yeltsin symbolised their aspirations for freedom. After his party won the majority of seats in parliamentary elections in the Russian Republic, it declared the Russian Republic independent and sovereign. Hence the Soviet Union (the USSR) was fast disintegrating with Gorbachev helplessly watching the scene. Other Republics demanded autonomy. He was losing his charisma and Boris

Yeltsin of the Russian Republic was stealing all the thunder. Gorbachev finally came forward with a proposal for a new treaty between the centre and the republics liberally providing more autonomy. The hardliners in the communist party were afraid of losing their power and struck on August 19, 1991, as mentioned earlier. The coup failed and Gorbachev assumed office after suffering confinement for a couple of days. The world leaders went on watching the situation in the Soviet Union, keeping their fingers crossed, and heaved a sigh of relief when he emerged from his confinement.

Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin agreed for changes in the political structure, and the state council which replaced the cabinet recognised the independence of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia on September 6, 1991. The failed attempt on the part of the coup leaders heralded the demise of the communist party. Gorbachev talked of 500 days Economic Reform. Earlier in July 1990, he had agreed to the reunification of Germany and also to its joining the NATO.

In August 1991, Gorbachev resigned as General Secretary of the Communist Party and disbanded the Central Committee. The Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, blamed the Communist Party for organising the coup, and what followed, was the suspension of all activities of the communist parties. *Pravda*, the official communist party newspaper in Russia, was closed and its property seized. The communist party activities in all Republics were banned. Estonia and Latvia were recognised as independent states in August 1991. By the end of the year 1991, Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were recognised as independent republics. Earlier, Gorbachev had urged the republics to agree to a new union treaty that would allow them greater autonomy. He said that if this new treaty was not signed (Russia, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia had already agreed for a new treaty), he would resign. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as the president of the Soviet Union (the following day Soviet Union ceased to exist). The Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia and eleven other former Soviet Republics) was formed on December 21, 1991.

## Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999)

On June 12, 1991, Boris Yeltsin became the first elected president of the Russian Federation. Russia replaced the defunct Soviet Union in the Security Council of the UN in 1992. Encouraged by the US, Yeltsin dismantled the communist system. The disreputable command economy had to yield place to a market economy. Thousands of large and medium scale state-owned enterprises faced privatisation in 1993. In the midst of chaos, Yeltsin had to face impeachment, but he survived. Large-scale corruption and unemployment dogged his presidency and the US government promised a huge economic assistance package to overcome the problems of transition.

In 1993 President Bush and President Yeltsin signed the START II treaty in Moscow by which both agreed to cut their nuclear weapons by two-thirds. In 1994 Russia and the US agreed not to target their nuclear weapons against each other, and in the same year the former joined a peace-plan with NATO for military cooperation.

Between 1994 and 1996, Russia had to deal with the secessionist leadership of the Chechen Republic. The Russian troops fought a bloody war to crush revolt of Chechen Republic but could not make headway. Both finally agreed to postpone the independence issue until December 31, 2001. Yeltsin was re-elected President for the second term in 1996. Again the breakaway Republic of Chechnya created a crisis when it attacked its neighbour, Dagestan, in 1999. Bomb explosions in Russian cities were traced to the Chechen rebels. Russia maintained cordial relations with the US, China, and India. Ill-health forced Yeltsin to resign – which was overdue on December 31, 1999. In 1998, Russia had joined the G-7 club and expressed willingness to join the WTO. Russia recognised Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and orthodox Christianity as state religions.

### Vladimir Putin (2000—)

He had a remarkable career in Russia's espionage system before he became the prime minister of Russia. Subsequently, he became the acting President of Russia. He had gained immense popularity as a mastermind in Russian victory over Chechnya and also securing the majority support in the lower house (Duma), which Yeltsin lacked. At 47, he became the

youngest President of Russian Federation in March 2000, after defeating in election the communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, and also the liberal leader, Yavlinsky.

Putin had vowed to make Russian Federation a global power, and carry on his fight against corruption and poverty. The Chechen Republic, in a referendum on the new constitution, agreed to remain under Russian control. Russia along with France and Germany resisted efforts of the US and UK to pledge support to their war against Iraq (second Gulf-War).

## SOUTHERN EUROPE

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### Italy

The early sixties proved quite troublesome for Italy. Bitter party divisions, corruption, red-tapism and ministerial instability marked the political life of the country. The Christian Democrats was the most prominent party but it was badly divided on many issues and policies. There was no cohesion and the party's hold was declining. It could not form a majority and therefore had to depend upon other parties to form a government. The other parties were the Communists and Socialists who were led by Pietro Nenni. Among the Christian Democrats there were three factions, namely, the left, the centre and the right wing. In the early sixties, Amintore Fanfani and Aldo Moro of the first two factions tried to form a government and hoped to secure the support of Nenni's socialists. In spite of the right wing's opposition, the Christian Democrats belonging to the first two factions formed the government with Nenni's support. But the government was divided on the issue of reforms. This trouble led to stagnation and Fanfani's resignation for not securing electoral victory for his party in the 1963 elections.

This situation was overcome when Nenni who got maximum support from his own party formed a coalition with the Christian Democrats. Aldo Moro became the Premier and Nenni his deputy. This coalition government achieved considerable progress in the field of reforms. But all the time the two were afraid of party rights and factions which would bring down their coalition. About 1966 the coalition government survived many crises and showed signs of remaining in power. In the 1968 elections the socialists lost heavily and Aldo Moro also had to go. During the next few years the Christian Democrats continued to go along with whatever support they could get from others. In fact, the Italians lost much faith in democracy after looking at petty squabbles indulged in by political parties. Factional strife in each party became endemic.

The subsequent political happenings in Italy did not follow any specific pattern. The game played by political parties including the Christian Democrats and Socialists made the people weary. The country

was facing severe economic problems. A massive wave of strikes hit Italy in the late sixties. The oil crisis which brought inflation all over Europe also gripped Italy. The only solution to the political problems of Italy lay in communist participation. And this the Italian communist did.

The existence of numerous political parties—nearly 21 in number—always created instability in Italian politics and after 1968, no legislature could complete its full five years course. The 1968 election resulted in the emergence of the communist party (PCI) and it happened to be the second largest party. The disgruntled youth and southern immigrants were mainly responsible for the popularity of the communist party. In 1968 the governing coalition of Christian Democrats (DC) had run into deep trouble and the year 1969 witnessed large-scale agitations and violence. The trade union workers went berserk and the emergence of neofascist Italian social movement (MSI) further worsened the situation. Italy entered into a chaotic era for a period of another four years (1970-74) with governments rising and falling—45 cabinets had been formed and fallen since the establishment of the Republic. The economic miracle which Italy achieved during the 1950s and 1960s began to vanish in the mid-seventies.

The Italian economy was in deep distress in the mid-seventies, with the rate of inflation going up by 25 per cent and unemployment numbering a million. The Christian Democratic Party which controlled the government during the last decades had a mature leader, Aldo Moro, who played an important role in Italian politics. He was trying to bring political stability in the mid-seventies by bringing about an alliance between five major political parties, but his efforts went in vain because he was kidnapped on March 16, 1978, and subsequently his bullet-ridden body was found after 54 days. This heinous act was committed by the militants of the Red Brigades.

The main problem facing Italy was whether the communists, on account of being the second largest political party, should be taken into government. Any way the communists lent their support to the government headed by Giulio Andreotti. However, their support was for a short time since the government did not allow communists to join the cabinet. So the government fell. The Christian Democrats were losing ground on account of the assassination of Aldo Moro and the

communists too were losing much of their popularity in 1978. Political instability, and coalition governments rising and falling continued till the early 1980s. The Socialists became popular and Premier Benito Craxi's government stayed longest—three years. His second government had a short tenure. In the 1978 elections, the Christian Democrats once again became popular and formed the government under the leadership of Giulio Andreotti only for a short while. In the 1978 elections, the Christian Democrats fared better.

Budget deficits, unemployment in the south, terrorism, immigration (people coming from Africa and Asia) and racism had bedevilled each successive government right through the sixties, seventies and eighties.

One may wonder at why Italy was described as the 'sick man of Europe.' It was mainly because it had seen frequent changes of governments since the end of the Second World War which hampered economic growth. The 58th government came into being in April 2000 with Giuliano Amato as the PM. Today the Italians are a worried lot, and many do not like globalisation, for it is causing unemployment. Italy is a founding member of the EU and adopted the Euro currency in 1999.

## **Greece**

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Greece's relations with Macedonia took a nosedive, but the tension eased in 1995. Greece's relations with Turkey too remained hostile, since northern Cyprus under Turkish control tightened with Turkish troops arriving there. In March 2000, Stephanopoulos became president for a five year term. In November 2002, the UN Secretary-General put forward a detailed proposal for reuniting Cyprus. Both Greece and Turkey had given a cautious welcome.

In Greece the army seized power in 1967. Democracy never flourished there after the war. All opposition leaders including the king fled. But after seven years the Colonels committed a blunder. They got involved in the Turkish-Cypriot war. Unable to win the war against the Turks, they finally abdicated. The Exiles returned and Constantin Karamanalis assumed power as prime minister. He was sober and did not embark upon foreign adventures like his predecessors.

The New Democracy Party under the dynamic leadership of

Constaninos Karamanlis obtained 220 seats in the national elections of 1974, more than two-thirds, and therefore formed the government. It must be remembered that Karamanlis had governed the country from 1955 to 1963. After the collapse of army junta he had established the National Unity Government in July 1974 which permitted five major political parties to participate in the elections which were held in September 1974.

The main task of Karamanlis was to prepare ground for bringing about the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy. He took steps to depoliticise the Greek Army, and those culprits who foisted the army dictatorship were sentenced. He introduced a new constitution which ushered in parliamentary democracy with fundamental rights to citizens and an independent judiciary. The constitution provided for a powerful executive in the person of the President, who enjoyed sweeping powers, such as the right to dismiss the prime minister and dissolve the Parliament. Karamanlis took steps to make the Greek economy sound by reducing the rate of inflation from 30 per cent to 14 per cent. Steps were taken to provide fuller employment and doubling of wages.

With regard to foreign relations, Karamanlis struggled hard to make his country become a member of the European Economic Community (EEC). Greece joined the EC in 1978. Karamanlis felt that Greece should not remain politically isolated from the rest of the European community.

Relations with Turkey had always been under strain since 1973 because both Greece and Turkey claimed the Aegean Continental shelf. Turkey prevented Greece from enjoying the special status agreement with NATO by casting its veto. Turkey rejected the mediation offer of ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) to settle the dispute with Greece over the airspace over the Aegean Continental shelf. Karamanlis became President in 1980 and during that year Greece signed an agreement with NATO for readmission. It must be remembered that Greece had left NATO when Turkey had invaded Cyprus way back in 1974. Greece also signed a defence treaty with the US which replaced the old treaty of 1953. Disputes with Turkey were not carried to extremes because Turkey is also a member of NATO. Greece had taken steps to militarise the Greek Aegean islands as a precaution to prevent any takeover by Turkey.

The conservative rule of the New Democracy Party came to an end in 1981, and there began the rule of the socialist party led by Andreas Papandreou. Compared to Karamanlis's "generally stable" rule, Papandreou's proved "tumultuous". Even as opposition leader Papandreou had advocated alliance with NATO without compromising Greece's sovereignty, and defence pact with the US, on the same lines. He opposed the presence of nuclear warships of the US in Greece, and advocated socialisation of key economic sectors in the country. The socialist party rule came to an end in July 1989 with the economy touching rock bottom. The conservative New Democracy Party led by Mitsotakis returned to power in April 1990. The Greek government signed an eight-year defence pact with the US in July 1991.

## Portugal

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Portugal witnessed the end of Salazar's dictatorship in September 1968. Unlike Greece, Portugal's road to democracy was full of obstacles. Dr Caetano became the prime minister who introduced some liberal measures but Portugal retained all her African colonies. Caetano kept firm hold over the administrative structure and did not permit further liberalisation. After Spinola (an ex-army officer) wrote a book on the futility of retaining these African colonies, there was widespread sympathy for him. It led to a struggle for liberation in Portugal. The liberation movement was led by the dismissed general, Spinola. The first attempt to overthrow the government failed, necessitating a second and better organised movement which finally succeeded in overthrowing Caetano's government. Unfortunately, Portugal had no experience with parliamentary democracy. However, with fits and starts, some progress was made in adopting the western style of democracy in 1975. Portugal ceased to be a colonial power in the seventies.

The aim of the 1974 coup in Portugal was to achieve the three D's, namely 'decolonise, democratise and develop'. The first two were easily achieved but the third proved to be elusive. The socialist government of Mario Soares had a tough time dealing with the economic problems facing the country, and the three problems with which the government had been obsessed were bankruptcy, inflation (at 26.8 per cent) and

unemployment (17 per cent). Two extra problems that caused headache were the underemployment and huge trade deficit (1.5 billion American dollars). After much prodding by President Eanes, Soares introduced austerity measures and devalued the Portuguese currency (escudo) by 15 per cent. Further package of economic reforms followed which included a ceiling on wage-increases, and tax incentives to firms selling goods and services abroad. Tourism was promoted. As Soares did not pay attention to the agrarian reforms, he had to resign and Portugal had to choose a pro-Marxist Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves in 1975. After his short rule, Soares once again came back and formed a coalition cabinet in December 1977 by taking three Centre-Democrats into it. In the meantime 600,000 white refugees arrived from Angola to make things worse. The Soares government had to make its exit in July 1978 and the Democratic Alliance – a combine of Social Democrats, Centre Democrats, Christian Democrats and Monarchists – set up its government and took steps to prevent a communist take over. The new prime minister did not like President Eanes to continue at a time when there was presidential election. Unfortunately Prime Minister Carneiro died in a plane crash and President Eanes was elected for another term in December 1980. The Social Democrats of the new democratic alliance came to power and the President appointed its leader Balsemao to be the prime minister. Balsemao did much to “liberate civil society” from the Marxist influence. In the 1983 election Mario Soares of the Socialist Party staged a comeback and introduced several austerity measures to improve the economic health of Portugal.

The second half of the 1980s witnessed the rule of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), this time under the most enlightened leadership of Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva, a former economics professor. He introduced reforms to turn Portugal into a prosperous state. His liberal reforms attracted world investors because they offered fiscal incentives. Portugal joined the European Community. Due to fiscal incentives offered to local entrepreneurs and increased foreign investments, Portugal’s economy made a breakthrough with her GNP rising to 5.4 percent.

Professor George W. Grayson says: “Portugal’s evolution from a dictatorship to a prospering democratic member of the Community

represents one of West Europe's most impressive success stories." Cavaco Silva deserves due credit for achieving this miracle.

Portugal left East Timor in 1978 and it was annexed by Indonesia. In 1999 (December 20), Portugal ceded Macau to China after ruling it for nearly 442 years. Portugal joined the EU in 1986 and adopted the Euro currency in 1999.

## Spain

Nearing 80, General Franco refused to hand over power in 1969. But he nominated Bourbon Prince Juan Carlos his successor. The socialist and Christian Democrats were no longer happy at this political Development. Their hopes of a liberal regime were shattered to pieces. In the next few years the Spanish minorities, the Catalans of Barcelona and the Basques, began to agitate for their rights, and they found ready support from the general public in their respective regions. The Catalans began strikes and protest meetings and the Basques resorted to terrorism. The latter assassinated Franco's prime minister in 1973. In 1974 Franco fell ill and his powers were transferred to Juan Carlos for about six weeks. The political suspense in Spain ended with the grave illness of General Franco in 1975.

General Franco's regime in Spain spanning over four decades has been described as 'reactionary'. He came to power at a time when democracies in Europe were crumbling during the 1930s and Spain had civil war. It was Franco's idea that rulers should exercise authority to put down rebellions and authority should be respected. During his period he tried to promote social and economic modernisation of his country in his own way. General Franco brought Prince Juan Carlos to Spain in 1953 so as to make him his legitimate successor, i.e., king of Spain. At the time of his death in 1975, Franco tried to ensure the continuation of his systems and policies by incorporating them in the constitution. The prime minister was to continue to hold his office, but Carrero Blanco, the then prime minister, was assassinated in December 1973 by terrorists belonging to ETA (Basque Nationalist Group). Franco had to make some changes in the new political system. His pragmatic leadership brought some benefits to Spain. The transition to constitutional monarchy took

place after Juan Carlos became king of Spain. Reforms were introduced by the new prime minister, Carlos Arias Novarri. Arias was replaced in 1976 by another seasoned politician, Adolfo Suarez Gonzalez, who belonged to the Union of the Democratic Centre (UDC). In 1978, the new constitution was approved by 68 per cent of the electorate through a referendum.

Four major political parties, namely the UDC, the Right, the Communists, and the Socialists participated in the general elections of March 3, 1979 and the then 47 years old handsome Suarez became the prime minister by virtue of his party winning slightly less than two-thirds majority in the Cortes (Parliament).

King Juan Carlos brought further democratisation of his regime by accelerating the process of depoliticisation of the army. He accomplished this task by having friendly contacts with the senior commanders. Those who were found to be disloyal were sacked.

In 1979 Spain experienced a trade deficit of 26 per cent and 7 per cent unemployment. Her per capita income was lower than many European countries. The energy crisis in the seventies put attempts of the Spanish government at economic recovery in jeopardy. However, the Spanish government took pride that it reformed Parliament, legalised communist party, and entered into agreements with opposition parties – “Moncloa pacts” – for skilful handling of the economic crisis. However, demands for regional autonomy could not be conceded. Linguistic and cultural regions began to demand autonomy from the central government. During the transition period the Spanish government could grant only pre-autonomous status to regions like Catalonia, the Basque provinces, and Galicia. Suarez became unpopular within his own party and outside for mishandling certain issues and therefore resigned in 1981. His successor was weak. The transition period in Spain proved sterile. So Suarez's resignation provided the rebels a chance to overthrow the government but their coup failed. In the 1982 general elections the UDC lost and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) came to power with absolute majority. This party again came to power after the election victory in 1986, of course, with reduced majority, i.e., with 20 per cent less seats. The socialist government led by Gonzalez Laxe did well in achieving Spain's economic recovery. The only ugly feature was the

persistently high unemployment rate which stood at 20 percent in April 1988. But it was better than what it was in 1986 i.e., 22 percent.

In July 1988, King Juan Carlos said that "terrorism and unemployment were the two most serious problems" facing the country. Spain desired a closer union with the European Community. The Olympics held in Spain's Barcelona in 1992 and commemoration of Columbus's discovery of America (500th anniversary) during the same year were significant in this respect. Spain began to enjoy a fairly stable democracy and economy.

It was said that "Spain has been Southern Europe's other economic miracle." Its growth was compared to that of Japan because its per capita income doubled twice and her economy began to boom like that of Italy in spite of recession in the 1980s. After joining the European Community in 1986 her economy further prospered. During the early nineties there was some perceptible decline.

From 1982 to 1993, Spain witnessed the electoral victories of the PSOE in the four consecutive general elections. However, this chain of victory was broken when in 1996 a coalition of regional parties with conservatives formed the government. Spain was one of those countries which supported the US led coalition to attack Iraq (Gulf War II). She is one of the active members of the EU.

## Turkey

Turkey under Mustapha Kemal Pasha became a secular state with a constitutional democracy. She lost much of her theocratic character and tradition and became Europeanised, thanks to the reforms of Kemal Pasha. She enjoyed a multiparty parliamentary democracy and after the death of Pasha, President Inonu guided her destiny. He required the backing of the armed forces to achieve democratic objectives.

One must remember that the Turkish army has been given the role of a guardian, since Kemal Pasha's time, to protect the Republic from political turmoil. This has been accomplished three times since 1923. General Gursel overthrew the civilian government in May 1960 and acted as caretaker.

Between 1960 and 1980, Turkish political life witnessed the existence

of two major, and half a dozen minor political parties, the major ones being the Republican People's Party (in Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) and the Justice Party (in Turkish: *Adalet Partisi*, AP). The former had a half century standing until 1972 and represented the elite in Turkish society. After the exit of Ismet Inonu, his successor Bulent Ecevit became the President of CHP in 1972 and tried to broaden its political base by tending to follow left-of-centre and social democratic policies. The Justice Party emerged to bring justice to the members of the defunct democratic party who had been jailed after army takeover in May 1960. The AP was led by Suleyman Demirel who served as prime minister for nearly a decade during the period 1965-80. It represented the wealthy industrialists and farmers and always protected their interests while in power. Demirel's policies undoubtedly resulted in the rich becoming richer, and the poor poorer.

On many occasions, when there were political power shifts during the 1970s, the National Salvation Party (a fundamentalist organisation) played its crucial role. Due to the nonchalant attitude of Demirel towards reforms, the university students and the leftists took to the streets during the period 1968-1969. When the AP won the October election of 1969 there were violent agitations from the youth resulting in many deaths. The army had to intervene and the caretaker government came into being during the period 1971-1973.

After the victory in the October 1973 elections, the CHP led by Ecevit formed a coalition government with the National Salvation Party. After its short life, it yielded place to another coalition formed by the AP from 1975-77. After its short life, history was repeated. Ecevit who came to power in January 1978 introduced reforms including the devaluation of the Turkish lira at the instance of the IMF. The failure of his economic reforms brought about defeat of his party in the next election, and what Turkey witnessed during the years 1978-79 was political violence and political terrorism which took a heavy toll of precious lives (2,500 killed) and in 1980 another 2,000. Martial law was imposed on the country by Ecevit in September 1980. The Turkish commanders dissolved the Parliament, disbanded political parties, abrogated the constitution and put ban on strikes. They set up a Security Council and arrested 100 former members of Parliament. After some time they set up a civilian

cabinet to run the government.

Turkey's economic conditions began to worsen from 1977. As mentioned earlier, she had to devalue her currency in 1978. Her foreign trade declined, and her dependence on imported oil made things worse. She had to borrow \$960 million and seek another loan amounting to \$325 million. The IMF and the World Bank lent her another \$80 million. The Kurdish minority living in the southeastern borders of Turkey have remained hostile since the early 19th century. Periodic uprisings are very common and Turkey has brutally crushed their resistance.

## Turkish Foreign Policy

Since the late 1940s Turkey remained very close to the US since the latter considered the former as an effective check to Soviet expansionism. Turkey sent troops to Korea in 1950 to back the US forces. She joined the NATO in 1952. Turkey was included in the plan for European recovery, i.e., the Marshall Plan. The communist party was outlawed in Turkey in response to Truman Doctrine. Turkey was one of the five top ranking nations to receive military aid from the United States. Her relations with the US underwent severe strains on account of her invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The US imposed arms embargo for a short while. In recent years Turkey has provided air bases to the US forces, and also extended certain intelligence facilities.

Her relations with Greece have always been strained due to the Cyprus issue. During the period 1985-87, relations between the two further strained, and the NATO had to intervene to prevent a likely war. President Turgut Ozal of Turkey, and Greek Prime Minister Papandreu, arrived at a compromise known as the "Davos Spirit". But the Davos Spirit began to vanish in 1989. Mitsotakis's Greek government had taken a hostile attitude towards Turkey's membership application for admission to the European Community saying that "unless the Cyprus issue is resolved", Greece will cast its veto.

Turkey's relations with her neighbours – Iran, Iraq, and Syria – also came under strain in the last couple of decades. Turkey supported the UN sanctions against Iraq when she refused to withdraw from Kuwait. She gave all facilities to US Air Force in the Gulf conflict. Turkey was angry with Iran for spreading religious fundamentalism in her educational institutions. Turkey did not take sides during the Iran-Iraq war and maintained friendly relations with the other Arab states, who are close to the US.

In the 1990s, Turkey lost its sheen as a secular country after the rise of Islamic parties. In 1993 a lady prime minister named Tansu Ciller came to power. Secularism ended in the country in 1996 (after 73 years) when the Turkish Parliament gave its consent to a coalition government led by an Islamic Party which had advocated an Islamic identity for the country.

Erbakan became the first Islamic PM but soon resigned. Mesut Yilmaz replaced him. Secularism seems to have triumphed since Islamic parties were banned. Even the largest political party, the Welfare Party was disbanded because it was found to be anti-secular. In 1997 Turkey was annoyed when the Greek-Cyprus planned to join the EU. In view of this situation, Turkey planned to integrate Turkish-Cyprus with herself in a phased manner. One should remember that Greek-Cyprus (southern part of Cyprus) is recognised by the EU. Turkey's application for joining the EU was refused. The EU sets terms and conditions for compliance by the Turkish government for joining the EU. Seventeen political parties in Turkey participated in the General Election of October 2002, and it resulted in the victory for the Justice and Development party led by an ex-mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has an Islamic bent of mind. Erdogan has an immense task ahead, that is, to lift the country from its economic downturn, which many say was caused by the ex-prime minister Bulent Ecevit. The new government is all set to carry out reforms suggested by the IMF and also the EU (as a condition for joining the EU). Turkey has to improve its image since the EU has pointed out human rights violations. Recently Turkey denied passage to US led coalition forces to attack northern Iraq despite the promise of massive aid.

## EASTERN EUROPE

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### Poland

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Two factors which remained unique in Poland's history are the role of the Catholic Church and politically conscious workers union. Gomulka's rule came to an end in 1970 because of the riots which took place in Gdynia. There was change of leadership in the Polish United Workers' Party, and Edward Gierek took over as its new First Secretary in December 1970. At the time of assuming the charge, Gierek realised the gravity of the economic situation facing Poland. The debts to the West stood at \$6 billion and hard currency was needed to import oil from the OPEC. There was terrible housing shortage. There was a high rate of absenteeism of workers. There was shortage of food. Gierek visited the US for food aid, and in the following year (1975) President Gerald Ford reciprocated by visiting Poland.

After 35 governments signed the Helsinki Accord, the human rights activists and intellectuals proposed amendments to the 1952 Polish constitution. The government had to bow to the pressure exerted by the Human Rights activists and the Catholic Church. When the food prices were raised and massive demonstrations took place, many workers were arrested and as a consequence the KOR (Committee for Defence of Workers) was formed in 1976. The KOR expanded its activities, and in 1977 there arose another organisation, namely, Movement for Defence of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCIO) which was founded by 18 dissidents. After the food riots of 1976 the students in the universities formed their own unions, and demands to organise free trade unions were also heard. The Polish government tried to suppress these organisations. Two other organisations which joined to seek reforms from communist regime were the KSS (Committee of Social Defence) and PPN (Polish Independence Compact). A few leaders worked underground, and the Amnesty International too opened its unit. What all these organisations demanded was respect for human rights, liberties and religious freedom. Almost all demanded the right to form free trade unions.

In July 1980, increase in food prices caused strikes, and they were

settled by government with “promise of wage-increase”, but the one which took place at Gdansk by 17,000 Lenin-shipyard workers proved to be the biggest; and the Polish government had to reach an agreement in response to their 21 demands.

Gierek was replaced in September 1980, by Kania who tried to manage the strike-torn country in such a way so as to avoid Soviet intervention.

The independent trade union movement *Solidarity*, led by Lech Walesa, had the following of more than 10 million workers, including 800,000 communists as members. Walesa’s Solidarity had shown how a highly disciplined organisation should be like. The charisma of Lech Walesa drew worldwide attention and every fourth Pole grew a moustache like his in 1980s.

In December 1981, the military junta in Poland led by General Jaruzelski proclaimed martial law mainly for the purpose of crushing the Solidarity. The confrontation between Solidarity and the military junta caused immense hardships to the Poles but Lech Walesa remained firm like a rock. The confrontation attracted the attention of the world and brought great sympathy for Lech Walesa and condemnation for the repressive military junta ruling over Poland. In the meantime Gorbachev’s perestroika and glasnost wielded benign influence on Poland. After waves of strikes in 1988 led by Solidarity, General Jaruzelski was compelled to start his talks with the Solidarity leader. Prime Minister Rakowski admitted the government’s fault by saying that the Roman Catholic Church had unjustly been persecuted for supporting the solidarity movement. The church received legal status in Poland.

In the June election of 1989, the Solidarity won a landslide victory and the communist government resigned. Lech Walesa of Solidarity nominated Mr Tadeusz Mazowiecki to be the prime minister. He had to accept four communists to occupy key posts in the cabinet. Gorbachev had earlier told General Jaruzelski that he should accept the new situation without grudge and help setup the Solidarity-led government in Poland. The Polish army too agreed to support the Solidarity-led government. The Polish economy was in a terrible shape with foreign debts amounting to US \$ 39 billion in the early nineties. International institutions came forward for helping the Polish economy to recover, and

President Walesa did his best to bring about economic recovery.

The market reforms in Poland brought about some improvements. Lech Walesa's newly founded BBWR party lost the 1993 parliamentary elections, and the former communists and leftists took over the reins of the government. Two years later, he lost the presidential election. A referendum was held in May 1997, wherein the people voted for a new Constitution to replace the Communist Charter. Heavy rains caused floods in July 1997 which is regarded as the worst natural disaster of the century. Poland was one of the ten new countries to be inducted into the EU in 2004.

## Czechoslovakia

Gustav Husak's loyalty to the Soviet leadership was cent per cent and therefore he was asked to take over the leadership and bring about 'normalisation' in the country following the 1968 revolt and subsequent Soviet invasion. The Brezhnev doctrine of 'socialistic fraternal assistance' was to be implemented.

Husak followed what is known as "realistic socialism" (*realny socialismus*) and the First Five Year Plan had a modest aim of improving the standard of living of the people during the period 1971-75. The targets were no doubt achieved but the country began to depend on other countries for oil, and foodgrains from the Soviet Union (when harvests were poor). The dissidents including Dubcek attacked Husak's policies and Husak replied that dissidents and intellectuals were traitors.

Gustav Husak was re-elected in May 1980 by the Czech Parliament as president for the second term. After the oil crisis of 1973, and also the Yom Kippur war, the Czechoslovakia economy turned worse. The surplus budget turned into deficit. The Soviet Union increased the price of oil, and her satellite countries had to buy without any option. Prices of several consumer goods were raised by the government in the name of "price adjustment" since in socialist countries there cannot be inflation. The main export earner in Czechoslovakia was weapons which were sold to the Third World countries.

Husak imposed heavy censorship and the dissidents and intellectuals were thrown out of jobs or forced into exile. The Human Rights activists

were persecuted. The noted playwright Vaclav Havel along with other Czechs started a movement called 'Charter 77' after being encouraged by the Helsinki Accord. He appealed to the government to obey its own laws first. The Human Rights activists were persecuted when they sent a letter to the Solidarity leader in Poland about their support to his cause. From the late 1970s to the mid-80s, the Czech economy deteriorated and popular dissatisfaction rose. Living standards declined and economic inefficiency increased. There was a popular outcry for economic reforms. The plan proposed to achieve this was not implemented. Corruption made things worse. Husak had to resign in December 1987 and in his place came Milos Jakes.

In the late 1980s opposition to the communist regime became more vehement, particularly from the human rights groups and other intellectuals. All of them signed a petition in support of Vaclav Havel in 1989 when he was unjustly persecuted. The students, who were fed up with the authoritarian regime, protested and the police perpetrated brutal attack on these peaceful demonstrators. In the wake of this tension, two other organisations the 'Civic Forum' and 'Public Against Violence', joined a mass movement to oust the communist regime. Milos Jakes resigned. Thus, communist regime which had ruled over Czechoslovakia for 45 years came to an end. This 'Velvet Revolution', as it was called, ended in the victory of non-communists who made Vaclav Havel the president of their republic.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia changed its name as Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. But these two regions got separated and became independent on January 1, 1993. A bitter dispute on the shape of post-communist reforms brought the split. The Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the EU in 2004.

## Hungary

A majority of the Hungarians considered Janos Kadar, the man appointed by the Soviet Union (after the brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolution of 1956), as a traitor who "betrayed the revolution and his country". He ruled Hungary for 32 years, and the people who considered him traitor developed, surprisingly, a great respect in the

course of time. How did this change of feeling for this elder statesman of Hungary occur? Did he betray the Soviet Union to regain the affection of his compatriots?

The main answer to these questions lies in the economic miracle he achieved—the economic miracle known as the ‘New Economic Mechanism’. He achieved this miracle in spite of several political and economic limitations set by the Soviet Union. His “Limited Liberalisation” began in 1968 with some decentralisation in decision making, “a more rational pricing system” and a provision for the market to play its role. The aim of the New Economic Mechanism was to produce a socialist society “with a bourgeoisie face”. Hungary developed its foreign trade with the West during the period 1965-1977, but its main partner was the Soviet Union. Hungary had to borrow money from the West to meet the high cost of energy and also for obtaining technology and materials. Rezso Nyers, who helped Kadar in ushering in the economic reforms, is called “Father of the Reform” of 1968. The outcome of the economic reforms was the birth of the middle class which enjoyed many benefits. To see there is less resistance to the economic reforms Kadar’s Hungary tried to depoliticise her citizens. The keynote of Kadar’s system was not to create an atmosphere in the country where the communist party loses its hold, and secondly, to continue the old policy of remaining loyal to the Soviet Union.

The reforms of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union had its repercussions on Hungary. They indirectly caused Kadar’s regime to fall. Kadar was appointed to the post of President of Communist Party—a purely ceremonial post—and Miklos Nemeth took charge of the government. Kadar’s fall may also be traced to the failure of the economic system which could not deliver the goods in 1980s, particularly in an era of technological change. Hence the cry for reforms. Kadar jailed the communists who demanded reforms and thereby lost much of his popularity. The jailed communist-reformers were then bent upon removing him from his powerful post. They succeeded when the Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union began.

The communist party began to lose its control and permitted a free press. It allowed decent burial of the fallen heroes of the 1956 revolution. In 1990, elections were held and 52 parties participated to elect a

democratic Parliament, the second one after a gap of 42 years. The head of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, Jozsef Antall, was installed as prime minister of Hungary. Successive governments since the early nineties have played their part to integrate the country's economy with the world economy.

## The German Democratic Republic (East Germany)

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The state of East Germany was founded in 1949 after the establishment of West Germany (known as the Federal Republic of Germany). Known as GDR (German Democratic Republic), East Germany declared herself socialist and entered into the orbit of the socialist countries led by the Soviet Union. In the beginning, only a few non-communist countries recognised her independent status, but eventually, other countries accorded recognition. Although she remained as a satellite of the Soviet Union, her economic progress had been remarkable. She became one of the top ranking industrial states in the world. Although she was influenced by the western countries of Europe, ideologically she was close to the Soviet Union and followed her *diktat*. The Berlin Wall was erected in 1961, i.e., when the Cold War was in full swing. The GDR became totally dependent on the Soviet Union.

The man who gave a new identity and ideology to GDR's existence was Walter Ulbricht, the First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). During his leadership (1963-1971), there developed a "special German communist ideology", close friendship with the Soviet Union with expectation that the latter should respect "East German interests". He desired other satellite countries of the Soviet Union to do the same. Therefore he became a headache to the Soviet Union which brought about his fall in 1971. The Soviet Union chose his protege, Erich Honecker to lead the GDR.

There was four-power agreement on Berlin and the two German states (the FRG and GDR) were recognised by the world community in 1972-73, and the US accorded her recognition in 1974. The UN accommodated both of them as members in 1973. The GDR joined the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) and in October 1975 signed the

Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Aid with the Soviet Union within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Under Honecker's leadership East Germany made rapid economic progress, though it kept the people starved of consumer goods and could not solve housing problem. Dissidence in any form by intellectuals was not tolerated during the Cold War and East Germans were shot at whenever they tried to escape to West Germany by crossing the Berlin Wall.

With Gorbachev coming to power in the Soviet Union, his policy of perestroika and glasnost encouraged East Germans to go to the West. In the meantime Hungary opened her borders to East Germans so that they could go to Austria and thence to West Germany. Popular movements in East Germany demanded an open border with West Germany and also reunification with her. Honecker refused to accede to these demands. Gorbachev's visit to East Germany in October 1989, and the change of leadership (Honecker fell ill and he was replaced by Egon Krenz) brought about sweeping changes. For the first time, the leadership consulted the church, and agreed to the demolition of the Berlin Wall—symbol of Cold War. East Germans were permitted to go to West Germany to visit their relatives and friends with a choice of coming back. There was a talk of reunifying Germany or German confederation and events moved fast and Honecker was arrested for his misdeeds. Gorbachev allowed East European socialist countries to choose their own way, and East Germany demanded unification with West Germany. West German leader Kohl agreed. The reunification took place on October 3, 1990, after 45 years of separation. The West German Chancellor Kohl faced the problems of improving the economy of East German part which had suffered under communist rule.

## **Romania**

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Romania is situated in the central part of Europe. She was founded in 1859. She became one of the satellite states of the Soviet Union after World War II. The Romanian Communist Party (RCP) under the leadership of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej adopted the Stalinist model of economic reforms for economic development. Even after the denunciation of Stalin in the 1950s (Khrushchev's era in the Soviet

Union), Romania continued the Stalinist model under Nicolae Ceausescu who succeeded Gheorghe in 1965. He became the General Secretary of the RCP and also the president of the Romanian Republic. His highly authoritarian and centralised regime continued for the next quarter century. There arose the cult of personality, and Romania made rapid progress under his regime, particularly during the period 1965-1975. Romania was transformed from an agrarian state to an industrial one with an 8.6 per cent increase in the national income.

One of the hallmarks of Ceausescu's regime was that he followed an independent foreign policy. For example, he remained neutral when there was dispute between the Soviet Union and Communist China, established diplomatic relations with Bonn (West German government), condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, attached less importance to Warsaw Treaty organisation, rejected the Brezhnev doctrine, developed close ties with Communist China (following exchange of visits), disapproved of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and maintained cordial relation with Tito's Yugoslavia.

Ceausescu described Rumania as a "Socialist developing state" and adopted economic reforms known as 'New Economic Mechanism'. However, after early decades of progress, Romania under this scheme could not make enough progress in spite of carrying out structural adjustments.

Under Ceausescu's dictatorship, people in general, and the ethnic minority, Hungarians in particular, suffered great hardships. Ceausescu persecuted the ethnic minority. He never allowed democracy to grow and therefore became unpopular. His ruthless persecution provoked the people to revolt, and this began with a few hundred courageous Hungarians demonstrating in Timisoara city in 1989. The December 1989 revolution forced Ceausescu and his wife to flee but they were caught and executed. In the May election of 1990, the communists gained a majority of seats in Parliament. The Romanian economy was in very bad shape. Ion Iliescu became the president. The picture was not clear whether the December revolution which ended Ceausescu's regime would bring about the fruits of the revolution to the people or not. In 1990, the National Salvation Front formed the government. Seven years later Romania's king, Michael, returned home. He had been banished

from the country by the communists in 1974.

## **Bulgaria**

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Bulgaria, situated in the southeastern part of Europe, is little known. The state was founded in AD 681 and became a Socialist Republic in 1944. The communist regime under Todor Zhivkov (1954-89) had done a good job in transforming Bulgaria into an industrial state, but the fruits of industrialization did not reach the common people. He did not take interest in liberalising the policy and economy to be in tune with the changing times. His regime suppressed all dissent, and therefore protest-movements started which resulted in clashes with the police. The protest movements spread to areas where ethnic Turks lived in a peaceful manner. They were asked to change their names to suit Bulgarian nation and when they refused, the government came down heavily upon them. This issue brought clash with Turkey when thousands of ethnic Bulgarian-Turks fled to Turkey to avoid persecution by the Bulgarian government. The party leaders accused Zhivkov for showing favours to his son. On the day the Berlin Wall came down Zhivkov made his exit (November 10, 1989). His relatives and friends were purged from the influential posts and he was succeeded by Mladenov who stopped persecution of ethnic Turks and promised to promote welfare of the people. At the Extraordinary Congress, which was held in January 1990, Mladenov resigned his post in order to become the president of the state, while Andrei Lukanov became the prime minister. Alexander Lilov was elected chairman of the reformed Bulgarian communist party.

The pro-democracy movement in Bulgaria became a common feature and the reformist communist government brought about structural adjustments in the economic system in the spirit of perestroika, glasnost and democratisation.

The country witnessed the first free election in 1990 after four decades of Communist rule, and a eleven-member presidency came to power. The next year saw a non-communist government ruling the country. The Union of Democratic Forces, known for reforming zeal, won a resounding victory in the parliamentary elections in April 1997. Bulgaria was admitted into the EU in 2007.

## Yugoslavia

Tito's Yugoslavia was composed of six republics and two autonomous provinces. After his quarrel with Stalin, Tito introduced a decentralised communism in his country and accepted aid from Western countries. He followed liberal economic policies, and dealt with a firm hand the rise of Croatian nationalism. He introduced amendments to the 1963 constitution. He treated dissidents with some tolerance as long as they were not 'anti-socialist' and also "pro-Soviet", and the constitutional amendments strengthened his grip over the country by halting the process of decentralisation which it was felt, had gone too far.

The end result of this process was the drafting and adopting of a new constitution in 1974, in which the party and its functionaries were given a more active role. The constitution provided for collective presidency, consisting of one member from each republic or province (all totalling nine members). This was enlarged by adding another six members after Tito's death in 1980. Tito introduced "Worker's self-management system", a new feature in Yugoslavia's Marxist ideology. The Yugoslav People's Army which had been raised during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was in close alliance with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and their strong bond was to work as a bulwark against any future Soviet invasion of their country.

Yugoslavia tried to bring her economic system in line with the West in the 1960s but in the process suffered from high inflation (16 to 20 per cent in 1978 and about 30 per cent in 1979). The trade deficit began to grow rapidly and stood at \$2.5 billion in 1976 and \$ 6 billion in 1979. Yugoslavia began to move closer to the West by signing a five-year agreement with the European Common Market which provided for Yugoslavia to trade with the West so as to reduce her trade deficit.

Tito maintained strict neutrality during the Cold War and superpower rivalry. He joined the non-aligned movement of the Third World countries and kept in close touch with great leaders like India's then prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Nasser of Egypt. Tito tried to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, although he was close to the West and Third World countries. Yugoslavia condemned Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Yugoslavia warned the Soviet Union and

Bulgaria of any interference in her domestic matters. Tito desired East West *detente* and President Carter was impressed and stated that if the Soviet Union invaded Yugoslavia, the US government would provide her with enough assistance. He visited Yugoslavia in June 1980, two months after the death of Marshal Tito.

The death and end of Tito's dictatorship, brought Yugoslavia a host of problems. The political arrangement began to fall apart and the economic system developed many cracks, since Yugoslavia desired to be accepted as a member of the European Community. Centrifugal tendencies began to operate. Eight parties and governments in the country had not been welded properly, and each party enjoyed the power of veto. Regional needs became more important than the common good. The Federal League of Communists could not intervene effectively to stop quarrels. Serbia wanted the autonomous province of Kosovo, dominated by Albanians. The Albanians there wanted Kosovo to become a republic.

Yugoslavia which grew out of Serbia had been welded into a cohesive nation under the able leadership of President Tito. Unfortunately, after Tito's death, the nation became a melting pot due to fratricidal wars, and the six republics and two autonomous provinces fell apart in 1990. Slovenia and Croatia were the first to declare independence. A civil war in Croatia affected Bosnia, where the Croats and the Muslims voted for independence after a referendum in 1992. The Serbs in Bosnia did not like this situation (they opposed this referendum), and they formed a small republic for themselves within Bosnia. The US and the European Union accorded recognition to the Republic of Bosnia (also called as Bosnia-Herzegovina). The Serbs of Bosnia obviously had the support of Serbia, the latter along with Montenegro formed a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in April 1992. What followed was the 'ethnic cleansing'. The Serbs killed thousands of Bosnian civilians and extended their control over three-fourths of Bosnia. Europe had never witnessed such an exodus of thousands of refugees fleeing Bosnia, since the birth of Israel. Negotiations to partition Bosnia followed with peace plan put forward by the big powers. NATO air raids on Serb-held areas of Bosnia followed to force Serbs to agree for peace. It was in December 1995 that the parties to the war agreed for peace (Dayton Accords), and the UN intervened with its War Tribunal issuing arrest warrant on Radovan Karadzic, the

Bosnian-Serb leader. He resigned, and the US and its allies kept peacekeeping troops in Bosnia (1998). Unfortunately, the Croats, the Muslims, and the Serbs remain divided despite Dayton accords. After condemning Serbia-Montenegro (which formed a new Yugoslavian Federation), the UN expelled Yugoslavia in 1992.

In the Albanian dominated autonomous province of Kosovo in Serbia (Yugoslavia) there was serious trouble in 1998. The Albanian separatists desired independence for Kosovo, and the Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic used all methods to crush their revolt. What Milosevic did to the Kosovars was ethnic cleansing. Thousands fled Kosovo when the Serbian army mercilessly butchered the people and torched their homes. After so much bloodshed, torture, and rape in Kosovo, the big powers used NATO forces to strike at Yugoslavia itself. Seventy eight days of aerial bombing forced Yugoslav president to his knees. Russia wanted to stop this and was about to interfere on behalf of Yugoslavia. Finally, the war ended when the Kosovo Liberation Army agreed to surrender to the NATO. NATO's air-strikes have been condemned since it had no sanction from the UN Security Council. In 1999, Yugoslav troops left Kosovo, and the UN took charge of administration. By October 2000, the dictatorship of Milosevic was over. Vojislav Koštunica (2000-2003) was elected new president of Yugoslavia.

## Suggested Readings

1. Ergang, Robert and Donald, G. Rohr, *Europe Since Waterloo*.
2. Hughes, Stuart H., *Contemporary History: A History*.
3. Williams, Philip M. and Martin, Harrison, *Politics and Society in de Gaulle's Republic*.
4. Grosser, Alfred, *The Federal Republic of Germany: A History*.
5. Fainsod, Merle, *How Russia is Ruled*.
6. West Rebecca, *The New Meaning of Treason*.

## The European Union

*I*n modern times Napoleon and Hitler struggled to unite Europe with all its linguistic, cultural and economic diversities. They tried to realize their ambitions by wars at a heightened time of national rivalries. It was only after the two world wars, this vision of united Europe was revived out of sheer economic compulsions. The two world wars shattered the economies of many European countries, and the only hope of reconstructing their economies was by securing external assistance. The Marshall Plan offered great financial assistance to Western Europe till 1951, and thereafter the European statesmen found it necessary to improve their economies by means of increased economic cooperation.

## The European Community

The names associated with the economic integration of Europe by means of trade and customs treaties are Charles de Gaulle, Helmut Kohl, Francois Mitterrand, Jacques Delors, and so on. The first organization that was set up after the Marshall aid assistance was the Organization of Economic Cooperation (OEEC). It was followed by three other organizations, namely, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), and the European Economic Community (EEC). Member states associated with these organizations were one and the same. The European Economic Community was also known as the Economic Common Market. Six states which signed the treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957, were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Netherlands, and all these have laid the foundation of the European Economic Community or the ECM. In course of time, the EEC enrolled more members into its trading bloc after laying down certain terms and conditions. In the meantime, there took place a merger of EEC, ECSC and EURATOM in 1967. This merger resulted in the birth of the European Community (EC). The EC started expanding with the addition of more member states, like Denmark, the UK, and Ireland in 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995. The EC established its headquarters in Brussels (Belgium).

The main purpose of forming the EC was to have smooth flow of trade, labour, and services among the member states. The EC made members sensitive to the need for greater integration and provided a frame work for unified action, particularly in security and foreign policy matters, and also cooperation on police and justice matters. The EC set up a single commission, a single council of ministers, and other legislative and executives and judicial organs.

## THE MAASTRICHT TREATY

This treaty (formally called Treaty on European Union) was signed by all the 12 member states on February 7, 1992, at Maastricht (The Netherlands) and it came into force on November 1, 1993, after being

ratified either by their respective parliaments or citizens through referendums. The Maastricht treaty transformed the European Community [EC] into the European Union [EU]. The EU sought to create “Europe without frontiers” by throwing open its membership to all the European countries. The said treaty conferred citizenship rights to all the people who lived in their member states of the European Union. It also paved way for the creation of European Central Bank and a common currency—EURO. It tried to commit the members states to work towards a common security and foreign policy. Austria, Finland and Sweden were admitted into the EU in 1995. Its strength increased to twenty-five in 2004 with the admission of ten more members — eight of them from the former communist bloc.

The eight former communist countries which joined the EU in May 2004 were — The Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Estonia. The other two members were Cyprus and Malta. The EU covers a vast area with a population of over 500 million with diverse cultures, languages, histories and traditions. Subsequently, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. In June 2004, the leaders of European Union agreed to frame a new constitution which would put an end to a web of treaties that covered complex relationships earlier and replace it with a new constitution. The new constitution would provide better leadership for a more United Europe. It is also supposed to bring about a sharp ‘international profile and speed up decision making’ process. It would provide enhanced powers to the parliament and simplify the voting rules to end vetoes.

The European Constitution treaty (or Constitutional Treaty) was signed by the leaders of the 25 nations of the European Union (in 20 languages) on October 29, 2004, at the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome — the same place where the six founding members had signed the treaty of Rome in March 1957. As not all the member states — France and the Netherlands in particular — ratified the treaty, it had to be replaced by the Lisbon Treaty (2007) after a “period of reflection” by the EU leaders.

## **The Constitution**

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**The Constitution** contained around 350 articles which included new

powers for European Parliament and put an end to national vetoes on 45 new policy areas, covering judicial and police cooperation, and education and economic matters. More importantly the constitution provided for the post of a President, a Foreign minister and a Public prosecutor. Mr. Romano Prodi was replaced by the former Portuguese Prime Minister, Mr. Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, as President of the European Commission on November 22, 2004. The European Commission happens to be the administrative and executive body of the European Union.

The European Union consisted of four main institutions, vide, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. Subsequently the European Central Bank [ECB] was also added along with these institutions.

## **The Council of Ministers**

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It is the principal decision-making body of the Union and includes of heads of states, ministers of member states, and also the President of European Commission. Each member state holds of the Presidency for a period of six months on a rotating basis.

## **The European Commission**

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With its headquarters at Brussels [Belgium] it is the administrative and executive body of the European Union. It is headed by a President and its office is manned by a staff of nearly 20,000 people. The Commission's main function is to assist Council of Ministers and the European Parliament by drafting proposals for legislations and formulate policies for their consideration. There are 28 commissioners representing each of the 28 member states, and are appointed by the national Governments for a period of five years.

## **The European Parliament**

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The Parliament is composed of more than 750 members, representing the 28 member states and are elected for a term of five years. The Parliament functions from Brussels and Strasbourg and it supervises the activities of

other European Institutions. It presents new legislative proposals, jointly with council of ministers and passes the annual budget. There are nearly 4000 staff members, who are assisting the day to day functions of the European Parliament.

## **The European Court of Justice**

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Each member state is represented by one Judge in the European Court. The total strength of European Court is of 28 Judges. The European Court also includes eight Advocate-General and takes up cases relating to legal issues and disputes, mainly concerning the Community Law. In each case a preliminary ruling is followed by a final judgement. Most of the cases which come before European Court for adjudication are from the national courts relating to the Community Law, and the rest from the other institutions of the EU.

## **The Advent of EURO**

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One of the most momentous decisions taken by the European Union was the introduction of a common currency - The EURO - on January 1st, 1999. Eleven member states of the EU, namely, Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Luxembourg, joined Economic and Monetary Union [EMU] with EURO as the currency, despite much cynicism from the other member states. In the course of time, seven other member states joined the EMU, which covered a vast area with more than 330 million people, using the EURO as a sole legal tender. The Euro banknotes and coins first started circulating in the twelve Euro-states (original eleven members and Greece) by January 2002. The EMU hopes to make Europe an economic power house by augmenting the volume of the International Trade, simplifying the monetary transactions and to bring about pricing equality. The EURO conversion rate was fixed in terms of "National Currencies" and approved by the Members of the EMU, on 31st December 1998.

## **The European Central Bank**

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The European Central Bank [ECB] is one of the main organs of the European Union and acts as a Federal Reserve Bank for the member states joining the EMU. The National Banks of the member states belonging to the EMU act as a subsidiary to the ECB.

The Eurozone area in Europe covers the area of member states, joining the EMU, where the EURO is sole legal tender. The Eurozone member states are among the greatest trading partners in the world, with a GDP amounting to more than 13 trillion dollars. In other words the EURO bolstered the image of the EU as an economic super power, next only to the U.S. A few countries including the UK remained out of the EMU zone for their own reasons. For the UK, its currency, the Pound Sterling, was associated with national pride and sovereignty. The new constitution of the European Union was not approved by a few countries due to several reasons. The first main reason was over the controversy regarding the admission of Turkey into the Union. Turkey is a Muslim country and did not fulfill the Copenhagen criteria—that is the absence of democratic set up, no respect for minority and a dysfunctional market economy. Therefore, the new constitution was kept at abeyance during the period 2005-2007.

During this period the EU began to face number of problems and challenges, such as terrorism, crimes, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, restrictions on fundamental rights of its citizens, corruption, money laundering and global warming. At the same time the EU had to maintain cordial relations with the developed and developing countries in order to enhance its image as an economic superpower. It had to meet the expectations and aspirations of its citizens in matters of freedom, solidarity, security and so on.

The EU was in the process of establishing close relations with the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, The World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. This had to be done so as to make the EU institutions to work in close liaison with the above world organizations. Therefore, the 27 member states of the EU felt necessary to have a new organizational set up and hence the Lisbon Treaty.

## **THE LISBON TREATY [DECEMBER 13, 2007]**

The Lisbon Treaty is being regarded now as a major amendment to the earlier treaties which had established the European Union. The treaty made desired changes in the working of the four or five main institutions, mentioned above, so as make them more efficient, more representative, and more comprehensive in its approach towards securing freedom, speedy justice, and security. The treaty was finally approved by all the 27 member states of the EU and it came into effect on December 1, 2009.

### The more democratic and transparent Europe

The Lisbon Treaty assured its citizens a more democratic and transparent Europe. This objective is to be achieved by strengthening the role of the European Parliament and by means of increasing its powers in areas of the policy making. The European Parliament is made equal in status and stature with the council, particularly in matters like budget making and international affairs. It offers more opportunities to the EU citizens in voicing their opinions and presenting their proposals. The treaty would like to have a better involvement of national parliaments with the working of the European Parliament. The relationship between the member states and the EU has been made cordial and clearer. The treaty provides for the withdrawal of a member state from the Union.

### A more efficient Europe

The Lisbon Treaty has simplified working methods and voting rules. It has streamlined the working of its institutions so as to make the EU more efficient, particularly in areas of major concern. It has introduced concept of "qualified majority" which would come in to effect in 2014. Effective and efficient decision making has become the two hallmarks of the EU institutions. The treaty introduces an effective link between the elections and the appointment of Commission President. It has provided election procedures for composition of European Parliament. The Lisbon Treaty has enhanced the EU's ability to function in several policy areas for improving life of its citizens—policy areas of freedom, security and justice. The other areas of concern includes public health, climate change, civil protection, energy policy, humanitarian aid, space, research, tourism

and administrative cooperation. The Schengen agreement enables EU citizens to travel freely across the borders without any hindrance [except a few countries]. Thus, a more efficient EU hopes to achieve a better image in the global arena.

## **Freedom, Solidarity, Security, Rights and Values**

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Adding to the “Four Freedoms” already granted by the Maastricht Treaty [free movement of goods, services, money and citizens], the Lisbon Treaty grants its citizens a charter of fundamental rights which could be legally enforced. These rights includes civil, political, economic and social rights. The treaty desires to bring about solidarity between member states and the Union by providing opportunities to act jointly in such matters like terrorist attack, meeting the needs of the victims of natural or man-made disasters, and during the energy crisis. The treaty compels the Union to provide increased security for all of its citizens by increasing the powers of the police to fight crime and terrorism. The treaty also includes provisions for offering humanitarian aid, civil protection and public health services.

## **The EU in the age of globalization**

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The treaty enables the Union to promote European interest and values all over the world. It should be noted that the Union should arrive at a consensus with the member states on how to present it's policy in one voice – particularly in relations with other countries. It was felt that the Union should be represented by a Foreign Policy Minister.

Lady Cathy Ashton was appointed as the Foreign Policy Chief to look after the foreign relations of the Union. She has been provided with a new office called ‘The European External Action Service’. Lady Ashton’s task is no easy one because she has to persuade the 28 member states to agree on certain policy matters concerning the EUs relations with other countries. She has achieved diplomatic success in the UN over the issue of Kosovo. It was due to her efforts that a majority of EU members agreed for granting independence to Kosovo with the help of UN. To

make her work easy, she has appointed 28 EU Ambassadors to give the EU diplomacy a sharp edge. The EU is exercising its soft power which includes financial assistance, humanitarian aid, peace keeping missions, trade, and offer of admission to lucrative EU.

## Achievements So Far

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As mentioned the EU has unleashed its soft power on many occasions. For example, the EU sent peace keeping missions to Balkans, mainly to Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina in 2003. The EU also sent its forces for replacing the NATO forces for police duties. It sent police missions in 2007 and 2008 to Afghanistan and border areas in Africa for the protection of refugees. A EU mission was also sent to monitor the election of the President in Afghanistan.

It has intervened in the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 and brought about the ceasefire. It encouraged both of them to start negotiations. The EU also sent its forces in 2008 to maintain law and order in Kosovo. The EU has so far signed number of agreements and facts for maintaining the cordial relations with countries like Russia, China, India and so on. For example, it signed a breakthrough agreement with Russia in May 2005 for enhanced cooperation in the fields of economy, freedom, security, justice, education, science and research.

In January 2010, the EU provided an aid relief to the extent of 400 million Euros to the quake hit people of Haiti. During the same year the EU provided 70 million Euros to the flood affected people in Pakistan. In December 2008, the EU launched maritime operations against Somali pirates in order to protect its ships which were delivering food aid to Somalia.

The subprime crisis in the United States had great impact on other economies in the world - no less in the European Union.

## Global Recession [2008-2010] : EU's economic woes

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## Greece

The first member state of the EU to be affected by this contagion was Greece [2010]. The Greek government in the past had been spendthrift, inspite of EU's earlier direction to all the member states that their budget deficit should not exceed 3%, and public debt not more than 60% of the GDP respectively. The huge deficits run by Greek government had its impact finally on the bond markets. Greece sent an SOS to the EU, and the latter, after much delay, finally decided to render financial assistance to the tune of 110 billion Euros [\$ 145 billion] in collaboration with the IMF and the European Central Bank. But this bail out involved the Greek government's acceptance to undergo a rigorous austerity program such as job cuts, wage cuts, and cuts in public investments [even on the EU funded projects]. The Pasok [Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement] party led by Greek Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou agreed to swallow this bitter pill.

## Ireland

Ireland was the next member state to send the distress signal to the EU about its financial crisis. It had asked for a bailout fund to meet the cost of reviving the fallen banks. The chief cause of this economic crisis had been burst in the house property bubble. Many banks could not recover loans given to the builders/developers for housing projects.

## Portugal

The next in queue to ask for a bailout fund was Portugal. Portugal had been flourishing during the 80's, but unfortunately the economy took a down turn during the first decade. The Portuguese Banks were woefully unsuccessful in tapping capital markets because of down grading of sovereign debt. The EU and the IMF announced a 78 billion-euro bailout package for Portugal in May 2011.

## Spain and Italy

Spain and Italy too had been affected by the debt crisis, and both of them are unfortunately unable to cope with deficits in their economy. Moreover powerful members of the EU are now deciding on how and on what conditions assistance to be given to the affected. The Euro is in the danger of rapid fall due to debt crisis. Many eurosceptics believe that the EU ought not to have expanded to it's present strength [28], as most of them have been lacking in financial discipline. In the meanwhile, Turkey had been pressing hard for admission into the EU, and justifiably so since it has fulfilled major conditions or obligations [except for human-rights violations against Kurds]. The International Monetary Fund predicts that the Euro Zone members will suffer from high unemployment rate during the next five years.

The EU had come under criticism for not lending enough financial support to the NATO in it's war against Afghanistan. Another important criticism leveled against EU was for not taking an unified action on the issue of Yugoslav wars. Recent criticism surrounds the EU for not adopting a spirit of tolerance with regard to the followers of Islam living in the member states. France and Belgium have imposed a ban on wearing of niqabs and burqas by Muslim women in public places, and Switzerland has prohibited the construction of minarets. Europe's Muslim population was outraged after the Danish publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammad. Another classic example of religious bias of the EU could be seen in the non-admission of Turkey. Turkey meets the Copenhagen criteria except for its treatment of Kurds.

The EU is yet to make its presence felt all over world as a super state. It has to overcome many problems, and achieve proper cohesion in its working so as to present a proper image.

## Post Cold War Era: The Dawning of 'New Europe'

The fall of the communist regime in the Soviet Union heralded the birth of a new era in the history of modern Europe. The countries of eastern Europe declared their independence and chose democracy and free market economy after their liberation. Many of them joined the NATO alliance as members. Finding the free market economy with all its defects as beneficial, most of the east European countries began to join the EU. The ten communist countries were admitted to the EU in 2004 and 2007 [the last two being Bulgaria and Romania].

One of the most important features of the post cold war era was the emergence of the EU. It began with the free democracies of the western Europe joining the European common market in 1957. It began to expand from 1957 to 1993 with the admission of many more countries. The EU developed as a secular super-state in the years to come. Russia did not join the union but preferred to introduce the free market economy step by step. Let us examine how the European countries fared in this new era of economic integration and political unity.

### The Federal Republic of Germany

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After demolition of the Berlin wall in 1989, the unification of Germany took place under the leadership of West Germany's Chancellor, Helmut Kohl (He was Chancellor of West Germany 1982-90 and that of united Germany 1990-98). The Chancellor signed a treaty with his counterpart with the result that both the Germanies got united. It must be remembered that East Germany had remained extremely poor and

therefore the Chancellor tried to improve the economy of the reunited Germany by introducing economic reforms. He was compelled to increase the taxes and cut government spending much to the chagrin of the people. Kohl's tenure as Chancellor of a coalition government ended in 1998 after his defeat in the general elections. The social democrats lead by Gerhard Schroder came to power.

**Gerhard Schroder** of socialist democratic party ruled united Germany from 1998 to 2005. He ran a coalition government with the Greens Party which was led by Joschka Fischer. The new government implemented a package of tax reforms in 2000 in view of the prevailing recession. Schroder's government also carried out what is known as the 'Agenda 2010' which included reforms in social and health sectors. The government highlighted the importance of ecological issues to the citizens and tried to implement the reduction in Green house gases in conformity with the prevailing protocol.

It was in 1999 that Germany sent its troops for the first time since World War II to participate in the NATO bombings over Yugoslavia. At that time the Yugoslav President was carrying on ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. After the 11th Sept. 2001 terrorist attack in the U.S.A., Germany supported the United States government in its war on terror. Germany also sent troops to Afghanistan to liberate the Afghans from tyrannical rule of the Taliban.

In the meantime, Germany adopted EURO as its currency replacing the Deutsche Mark. Schroder's first term ended tragically with German cities facing floods. Several German cities like Dresden and Magdeburg got inundated.

## **Schroder's reelection**

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In the next German federal elections of 2002, Schroder's Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) won a simple majority. With the help of the Greens Party, he got reelected chancellor for the second term. In 2003, the U.S. and the U.K. launched their war against Saddam Hussain's Iraq. They accused Saddam Hussain of producing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons secretly, thereby violating the UN sanctions. When Germany and France refused to join the war, the U.S. Secretary of

Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, remarked that they are like 'Old Europe' in contrast to other European countries that gave support.

Schroder's government was alarmed after witnessing the rise of unemployment and aging population in Germany. The economic recession badly affected the people and the government was forced to introduce 'Hartz Reforms'. As the government did not have the required majority in the upper house of parliament [Bundesrat], the said reforms were stalled. It forced the government to request the President to call for general elections, as the opposition refused to co-operate. So on July 21st 2005, the President dissolved the parliament and called for general elections. Election results showed that both the major parties Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CDU/CSU coalition) and SPD won the same number of seats, not one of them was having a clear majority to form a government. Therefore, the major political parties finally agreed to form a grand coalition government with Mrs. Angela Merkel as Chancellor. She became the first female Chancellor in German history.

### Angela Merkel (2005-)

Angela Merkel, a dynamic leader, tried to retrieve the economic health of her country by introducing structural reforms. Along with the French president Sarkozy, she became the main pillar of support to the EU and EMU. Without bothering much about the Eurosceptics, she continued to support the objectives of the EU, despite some setbacks like the rejection of its constitution, and controversy surrounding the admission of Turkey (a NATO member). France and Germany have been facing problems with their Muslim immigrants since long. It appears that they have not integrated with the European society. Moreover, these two countries have been facing the problem of illegal immigration. In view of the German government facing some problems from its Muslim citizens, she was compelled to say that multiculturalism has 'absolutely failed.' However, she was quick enough to add that Islam 'is part of Germany.' In the 2009 federal elections, the CDU/CSU and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) combine won a majority of seats, and they elected Angela Merkel as their Chancellor for the second time. During her second term

in office, she had to face the worst economic crisis, mainly from the effects of global recession (2008-2010). Along with France, she had to manage the EU, instill financial discipline among EU members, make EURO safe, and ensure Europe's 'success in a globalised world.' With the Lisbon treaty amending the constitution of the EU, foreign policy required focussed attention. Merkel along with the French leadership achieved limited success in foreign policy matters. Under her leadership, the EU forced Serbia to accept Kosovo's independence. The EU imposed tough sanctions against Iran which they believed was secretly producing nuclear weapons in spite of the UN's prohibition. She has been able to persuade other countries to reduce Green House gas emissions. She also urged the Russian president to accept the European missile shield agreement. Merkel was elected Chancellor for the third time in succession after her CDU/CSU coalition won by an overwhelming majority in the 2013 federal election. She now heads the CDU/CSU and SPD coalition government. Merkel faces challenges on the economic front as Germany's GDP annual growth rate has fallen to 1.3% in the fourth quarter of 2013 from the peak of 5.2% in the first quarter of 2011. Unemployment rate in Germany stands at 5.1% in February 2014. However, Germany had a current account surplus of about 7.3% of its GDP in the last quarter of 2013.

## The United Kingdom: John Major (1990-1997)

**John Major** rose to power through party ranks and became Foreign Secretary under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Subsequently he was appointed to the post of Chancellorship of Exchequer. When Margaret Thatcher resigned, John Major succeeded to the post of the Prime Minister. As party leader and Prime Minister, John Major easily won the general elections in 1992. During the early years of his office, he had to face many economic problems caused by the global recession [1990-1993]. People began to observe that he was not made of the same stuff like his predecessor. His Prime Ministership lacked dynamism. His government was marked by indecisions. Thus, the conservative rule came to an end after 1997 elections. It was replaced by the labour party which had won the elections by a landslide margin. In 1994 the

government opened the channel-tunnel linking Britain with European continent. A fast passenger train carries people from the U.K. to France and vice-versa [known as EUROSTAR].

## TONY BLAIR [1997-2007]

Tony Blair became the Prime Minister after he led the labour party to victory in 1997. He was 43 when he became the Prime Minister, the youngest to assume office [since Lord Liverpool in 1812]. Another record he set was that of being the longest-serving Labour Party Prime Minister in Britain. Blair became an MP in 1983, joined as member in the Labour Party's Shadow Cabinet in 1988, and was elected party leader in 1994. He pleaded with the party-members to shift their political stance from the extreme left to middle. In other words, the party should adopt flexible attitude towards 'state control and public ownership of certain sectors of the economy'. It must be remembered that Marxism had lost its grandeur, and capitalism triumphed after the fall of the Soviet Union.

One of the greatest achievements of Tony Blair was to bring lasting peace in Northern Ireland in 1998. He brokered peace agreement between the warring factions—The Unionists and Republicans. The peace process was initiated between the two, leading to an agreement which ended thirty years of conflict. His reforms included the introduction of devolved assemblies for Wales and Scotland. The month of May 1999 proved historic for Scotland which got a parliament after three centuries. In the same month, a new Wales assembly was opened after a gap of six centuries.

Blair's regime witnessed raising of taxes, fixing of minimum wages and introduction of few employment rights. Britain's integration with the EU was strengthened due to Blair's efforts. Blair also promoted market oriented reforms in education and health sectors. He advocated constitutional reforms and implemented strict anti-terrorism laws besides issuing identity cards. He introduced police reforms which increased the power of constables 'by adding to the number of arrestable offences'. The DNA recording of all criminals was introduced.

**Foreign Relations:** Blair became one of the strong supporters of the US President George W Bush. Blair whole-heartedly supported Bush's

“war on terror” following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York’s World Trade Center, and the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. The US President accused Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain of secretly producing chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, in violation of earlier UN sanctions. He was also accused of having secret contacts with the world’s most dreaded terrorist, Osama Bin Laden [ leader of Al-Qaeda]. The US with the UK launched armed attacks on Iraq in 2003 without UN’s approval and toppled Saddam Hussain’s government.

Blair’s popularity as Prime Minister declined rapidly when it was found that he had misled the British Parliament by saying that there were enough proofs for going to war against Saddam Hussain. His fall became imminent in 2007. He was questioned frequently on the Iraq war by the party leaders and public. On June 24, 2007, he transferred the party leadership to Gordon Brown [Chancellor of Exchequer]. Three days later he resigned making it easy for Gordon Brown to succeed him. President George Bush praised Blair for his unstinted support to Iraq war by saying that ‘America has no truer friend than Great Britain’.

Blair’s sympathy with Israel was well known. He developed good relations with Israeli leader Ehud Barak and subsequently with his successor, Ariel Sharon. During the Palestinian conflict he met Yasir Arafat frequently to speed up peace process – ‘Road Map for Peace’. Blair’s sympathy lay with Israel because he supported the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Blair also did not criticize the deaths and destruction caused by Israel in its war with Lebanon.

**Gordon Brown (2007-2010)** followed the policies of Blair and tried to improve the British economy. The immigration policy was tightened so as to enable the government to check skilled immigrant workers. The British general election in 2010, resulted in defeat of Labour Party. Even the Conservative Party which gained a slight majority in the parliament had to take the help of others to form a coalition government. The coalition government is led by David Cameron. His government is seriously thinking of reducing the budget deficit by 19% [involving an estimated job loss of 1.5 million] and defence budget by 7.5%. The Labour Party leaders describe these cuts in budget and defence as ‘reckless and dangerous to economic recovery.’

## France

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### Francois Mitterrand (1981-1995)

Mitterrand introduced radical reforms but had to modify them in view of the rightists gaining majority in the national assembly. After his reelection as President in 1988, he promoted France's deeper integration into the EU. His domestic policy lacked lustre. The socialists suffered defeat which led to further moderation of his domestic policy.

Edith Cresson's successor, Bérégovoy also did not last long as Prime Minister. He was succeeded by Edouard Balladur, a former finance minister of the RPR. In other words Mitterrand had his 'second co-habitation'. According to the constitutional convention, the President would have control over foreign policy and defence, whereas the Prime Minister of France will be dealing with finances and home policy.

## Foreign Relations

As mentioned earlier, Mitterrand may be described as the founder of the EU. He established better ties with France's former colonies in Africa and Asia. Unfortunately, France could not establish special relationship with Russia as was so during the Gaullist era. Mitterrand was worried about the effects of the downfall of Soviet empire and the break-up of Yugoslavia.

He desired to extend membership of EEC to other countries of Europe. Under his leadership, France participated in the Gulf war because Saddam Hussain refused to withdraw his forces from the conquered state of Kuwait. Mitterrand maintained cordial relationship with Helmut Kohl of Germany. Both struggled hard to bring about the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 which converted the EEC into the European Union. He died of cancer in 1996.

## Jacques Chirac [1995-2007]

Chirac was no stranger to French politics. He became the Mayor of Paris in 1997 and led RPR party and the centre-left to electoral victory. He became the Prime Minister during period 1986-88 under President Mitterrand. He made an attempt to become the President but failed in 1988. His major breakthrough in politics came when he got elected as President after defeating his rivals [Balladur and Lionel Jospin in the first and second rounds of election] in 1995.

During early years of his Presidency, France was feeling the effects of economic recession. Therefore, his government found it difficult to achieve any progress until structural reforms were carried out. The government introduced austerity measures which did not go well the people of France, as against the background of electoral promises made to them earlier. France's budget was pruned which provoked the labourers to go on nation-wide general strike - largest strike since May 1968. In the mean time, conservative Prime Minister Alain Juppe introduced a plan for pension reforms. This step also provoked huge protests from all sections of people. The President was forced to dismiss the Prime Minister to appease the protesters. France carried out a nuclear

test in Mururoa Atoll in the French Polynesia in 1995. The nuclear test provoked the environmental groups and the international community which outrightly condemned these tests. The President declared on 1st February 1996 that France would not conduct any more nuclear tests in future, and thereafter signed the comprehensive testban treaty with other countries.

The opposition party did not like his reforms-program, so much so, that the President had to dissolve the parliament and order fresh elections. He hoped to get a clear majority for his party to effectively implement his program of reforms. Unfortunately, the election results turned out to be worst, because the socialist party which he led along with the splinter groups, got defeated. Therefore, Chirac had to appoint the socialist leader Jospin as his Prime Minister. There began what is known as second co-habitation during the next 5 years [1997]. The government got much weakened because of reforms program which could not get satisfactory response. Scandals surroundings the RPR party and so on made the government most unpopular.

During the second term of office, Chirac was unable make much headway. His election to the Presidency took place because his main rival, Jean Marie La Pen of the National Front, had become most unpopular due to her speeches and actions. Therefore, the people of France found Chirac more acceptable candidate than his main rival. During second term of his office President Chirac exercised his powers over defence and foreign policies. He reduced the military budget, and decommissioned two aircraft carriers, thus [they had become too old and outdated], making the French navy vulnerable. Furthermore, he reduced the expenditure on producing the nuclear weapons.

In 2003, the French opposed the second Gulf war which caused regime change in Iraq, and eventual execution of Saddam Hussain in December 2006. The French President remained very friendly with Putin, George W Bush, the German Chancellor and the British Prime Minister.

## Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012)

Son of a French mother and Hungarian immigrant, Sarkozy was trained as a lawyer. He served as a Mayor of Neuilly, a Paris suburb, and

subsequently worked as Finance Minister under President Chirac. He is known to the French as a workaholic. In the 2007 Presidential election, Sarkozy representing the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) party got elected as the 23rd President of the French republic. It was a time when France was going through the evil effects of recession. Sarkozy became popular during the first two years of his office because he encouraged the French to be hard-working, risk-taking, more tolerant towards the minority, and follow the French laws rigidly. He adopted tough measures and checked illegal immigration. He welcomed the integration of skilled immigrants into the French society. However, he fast turned into a protectionist. He provided funds liberally to the ailing ALSTOM, a large French multinational conglomerate, in order to prevent its liquidation. He encouraged French companies to give more jobs to the French instead of foreigners. He took tough measures to check hedge funds and tax havens. He opposed Turkish admission to the EU. He had earlier opposed war against Iraq launched by US and the UK. He helped to negotiate peace between warring nations, Russia and Georgia. Sarkozy's pension reform bill (signed by him in November 2010) became a highly contentious issue as it increased the minimum retirement age of the French employee from 60 to 62. Its proposal had earlier (September-October, 2010) evoked large scale protests and general strikes across the country. Many critics say that Sarkozy had turned into a protectionist, and had ridden roughshod over the French due to the prevailing recession. The austerity measures adopted by his government managed to bring down the budget deficit from 7.1% in 2010 to 5.8% of the GDP in 2011. Sarkozy was defeated by François Hollande of the Socialist Party in the 2012 presidential election.

## François Hollande (2012-)

François Hollande assumed office as the president of France on May 15, 2012. His government managed to bring down the budget deficit to 4.5% of GDP in 2012, but failed to meet the target of 3.9% set by the EU for 2013. Public spending, under Hollande, has increased to 57% of the GDP which is the highest in the EU. The government has increased taxes, including a steep 75% tax on high earners, to make good the revenue

shortfall. The pension reform bill, passed by the lower house of parliament in October 2013, proposes to increase pension contributions period from the current 41.5 years to 43 years by 2035. This means the French employee will have to work longer in order to receive full pension. The unemployment rate in France is about 11%, the highest since the late nineties. All these have made Hollande very unpopular.

## Italy

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During the early nineties Italy faced formidable problems, and the main challenge was voter disenchantment. The Italian citizens were extremely alarmed at the instability of successive governments, large scale corruption, organised crimes, and increased government debt. Referendum held in 1993 approved, among other things, radical reforms in the Senate electoral system—changeover to Additional Member System from Proportional Representation (Additional Member System was replaced by Party-Lists Representation in 2005). To regain the voter's confidence, major political parties got reformed with a result that there was a realignment of political forces in 1994. It was in this year that general election was held for the new parliament. The parliament witnessed new faces *i.e.* 452 out of 630 members in the Chamber of Deputies, and 213 out of 315 members in the Senate. Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of Forza Italia party and a media magnate, was elected Prime Minister in May 1994. Berlusconi's government did not last long. He was succeeded by Lamberto Dini in January 1995. Dini's government too fell in May 1996. The next government was formed by Romano Prodi, the leader of Olive Tree party. His government lasted till October 1998. Thus, governments in Italy were most unstable. Berlusconi returned as prime minister for two more terms (2001-06 and 2008-11) —making him the longest-serving Italian prime minister after World War II. He is embroiled in many court cases, including those for soliciting sex from an under-aged prostitute and tax fraud involving purchase of American movies rights for television at an inflated cost by his Mediaset company. He has been convicted in the tax fraud case and sentenced to four years imprisonment. Instead of undergoing imprisonment, he has been ordered to do community service. Matteo Renzi of the Democratic Party

assumed office as prime minister in February 2014. He faces serious challenges as Italy's economy is in a bad shape and the unemployment rate is high at 12.7%.

## Poland

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In 1993, Soviet forces left Poland, and a new constitution was drafted that guaranteed the rights of all nationals, including ethnic minorities. As already mentioned President Lech Walesa led a coalition government during the period 1990-1995 with Waldemar Pawlak of the Polish People's Party (PSL) as Prime Minister. The new constitution came into force in July 1997 during the Presidency of Aleksander Kwasniewski (1995-2005). He was reelected President in 2000 after leading a party called SLD [alliance of the Democratic Left]. He was assisted by Leszek Miller who became PM of a coalition government in October 2001. Both President and Prime Minister wholly supported Poland's admission to the EU in 2004. It was unfortunate that this government saw its decline because of scandals.

In the parliamentary and Presidential elections held in September and October of 2005, respectively, Lech Kaczynski was elected as President. He represented Law and Justice party (PiS). The election turnout suggested that people were disillusioned with politicians of the time. However, in course of time, the government became popular but led a minority government. In May, a coalition of political parties [PiS, Samoobrona, and LPR] agreed to form a majority and a new government so formed developed a eurosceptical stance [towards the EU].

On August 14, 2008, the Polish government signed a treaty with NATO, which pledged the US government's support to defend Poland. It must be remembered that Poland had joined NATO as a full-fledged member in March 1999. This defense agreement provoked the Russian government, and Russia threatened Poland with a nuclear attack. However, the Russian government adopted a moderate stand after some assurances from Poland. President Lech Kaczynski died in a plane crash in Russia on April 10, 2010. On August 6, 2010, Bronislaw Komorowski was sworn in as the new President.

## Spain

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Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (2004-2011) of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) took charge as a Prime Minister after he won the election in March 2004. During his early career he had joined the Socialist party in 1979 and subsequently had become the youngest MP in 1986. It must be remembered that Socialist party had been winning the elections consecutively in the 80's and 90's. However, this winning streak stopped in 1996 when a coalition of conservative and regional parties formed the government. This was due to decline of socialist party which was ridden with a number of scandals. This conservative-regional group coalition government led by Jose Aznar got into trouble in 2004 when it held a meeting with the armed separatist group ETA which was behind the commuter-train bombing in Madrid. The evidence connected to the bombings clearly pointed out that militant Islamic groups were involved. The train bombing resulted in 191 deaths. This was just before the election held in 2004. It was this incident which provoked the people not to vote for conservative-led coalition group. So the socialist party [PSOE] led by Rodriguez Zapatero won the 2004 election. Zapatero tried to deal with ETA in a more conciliatory manner by holding peace talks in 2006 for bringing about permanent end to bloodshed. It should be noted, that ETA stands for independence for the Basque region in Spain. At present the Basque region is enjoying the autonomy.

Reforms introduced by Zapatero covered areas like gender equality, divorce laws, amnesty to illegal immigrants, legalizing gay marriages and domestic violence. These reforms along with the tough measures taken against violence of ETA had brought about victory in 2008 election.

As a socialist PM, Zapatero had enough worries, and these related to problems caused by the global recession. It must be remembered that Spain, as a member of the EU, had to follow the financial rules and regulations laid down by it to overcome problems relating to the deepening recession. Spain also faced an economic collapse. Its sovereign debt had become a main source of worry to the government. Zapatero's austerity measures made him unpopular. He tried to improve his image by carrying out cabinet reshuffle. Public opinion was not in favour of his continuance as the leader of the government. He decided not to contest

the 2011 general election. In the general election of November 2011, the Popular Party (PP) won an overwhelming victory over PSOE, and its leader Mariano Rajoy is the current Prime Minister of Spain.

## **The Czech Republic**

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As mentioned earlier, Czechoslovakia was split into two states in 1992, namely, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic's economy had made rapid strides of progress until 2007, when its GDP annual growth rate peaked at 7.7 percent. This was mainly because of its surging exports to the EU states (particularly Germany) and the inflow of foreign investments. The banks and telecommunication sectors were privatized. Many more sectors are likely to be privatized in the near future. The country had signed Schengen Agreement in 2007, and abolished border controls in respect of its neighbours (Germany, Poland, Austria and Slovakia). The Czech government has been reluctant to adopt the Euro as its currency due to political reasons. Its budget deficit remained very low in 2008. The Czech Republic had earlier been described as "most stable and prosperous of the post-communist states." However, the global economic crisis (2008) impacted the country's economy badly. Its economy has slowed down, and has even registered negative GDP annual growth rate in the last couple of years. Unfortunately the country has been rated high in corruption "among the other developed OECD countries." It has a very high literacy rate of 99%. It is hoped that the state will adopt the Euro as its currency in the future. The present state is headed by President Miloš Zeman (assumed office on March 8, 2013) and the government by Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (assumed office on January 29, 2014).

## **Serbia and Montenegro**

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The Serbian and Montenegrin population of former Yugoslavia established a loose federation in order to have close relationship. The law makers combined these two republics into one state with an option for any one to choose independence after three years [i.e in 2006]. In 2006 a referendum was held and the majority of Montenegrans chose independence. So the union was dissolved in May 2006 with the result

that Serbia and Montenegro became two independent states.

## Romania

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After it's liberation, the National Salvation Front (FSN) formed a government in 1990. Romania's King Michael, who had been banished by the earlier communist regime, returned in 1997. Corruption and crime went hand-in-hand in 1990s. It was only in recent years that the country has achieved political and economic stability. Romania joined the NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007. Today Romania is a republic led by President Traian Băsescu with Victor Ponta as the Prime Minister.

## Bulgaria

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Bulgaria began to face turmoil after it's liberation. She joined NATO (2004) and the EU (2007). The present government is led by Plamen Oresharski (2013-)

## Hungary

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After it's liberation from the Soviet Union in 1989, the new government of József Antall (1990-1993), and its successors introduced democracy and free market economy. This country attracted largest foreign investments among the countries in eastern Europe. Hungary joined the NATO in 1999, and celebrated the millennium of it's founding in 2001. It may be remembered that King Stephen I, had founded and united this kingdom in AD 1001. Today it is has parliamentary democracy with a government led by Viktor Orban.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia on March 3, 1992, following a referendum. The Serb majority in this country objected, and so followed a violent civil war among the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims). As a result of this war, close to a hundred-thousand civilians and military personnel were killed (majority of them Bosnian Muslims) and about two million displaced. The international community intervened, and an uneasy peace was restored

after signing of the Dayton Accords by the warring factions in December 1995. NATO forces were stationed in the country to maintain peace and enforce the agreements. The country became a Federal Republic comprising of two autonomous entities— the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (for Bosniaks and Croats) and the Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serb Republic). In 1995, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) indicted Radovan Karadzic, President of Republika Srpska, for committing war crimes against the Bosnian Muslims and Croats. He had to finally step down from power in July 1996. A three-member collective presidency— consisting of one Croat, one Bosniak and one Serb— was first introduced in the country in 1996. The members of the presidency are directly elected by the people of their respective regions. Each member gets to be the Chairman of the Presidency, for a period of eight months on a rotation basis, during its four-year term. The parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina has two houses— the House of Representatives (lower house) and the House of Peoples (upper house). The members of the lower house are directly elected by the citizens of the country. The presidency, which acts as the head of the state, selects the Council of Ministers from among the various ethnic groups. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), who heads the government, is appointed by the presidency and endorsed by the House of Representatives. As of February 2014, Željko Komšić is the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Vjekoslav Bevanda is the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

## Turkey

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Turkey is not listed in the European continent by the UN statistics division. It has time and again applied for admission into the EU. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is in-charge of the government since 2002. Just before the recession of 2009, Erdogan had brought about impressive changes in the country's political and economic landscape. The government controlled inflation, had improved its economy to such an extent, that its investment credit-rating went-up among OECD countries. It became an active member of the G20 club. Erdogan's government won a

referendum on constitutional changes in September 2010 which enabled him to establish its control over the army and judiciary. In 2005, the government was in a position to start negotiations with the EU about its admission. Unfortunately, Turkey's membership to the EU is blocked by France and Germany. In spite of its impressive records, Turkey was unable to persuade big powers in the EU to permit her to join the EU. It should be remembered that Turkey is an active member of the NATO, its national held the post of Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, and is a great leader of Muslim countries [with a robust young Muslim population].

## Russia

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During the first term of Russian President Vladimir Putin [2000-2004], the Russian economy did well with the GDP growing at 6.7% on an annual average and 11% increase in the average income of a Russian. Russia's external debt was reduced by nearly 70%, and it was on the road to economic recovery. Putin became quite popular because he managed to keep the Chechen rebels under check. As already mentioned, before he became President, he had been able to claim his victory over Chechen rebels in 1999. Putin decided to make Russia a super power, next only to the United States. He criticized his predecessors for having brought about the dissolution of the Soviet empire. He agreed to establish a market economy to please the western nations, especially so after the country's command economy had failed earlier. He decided to put an end to political corruption and improve Russia's ailing economy. He also decided to check a few independence movements, particularly in the autonomous province of Chechnya.

A couple of months after his election to the Presidency, Putin faced a very embarrassing situation when a new nuclear submarine *Kursk* sank in the Barents Sea under mysterious circumstances. All efforts made to rescue the crew [118 sailors] went in vain. The President was reluctant to seek the help of western nations even though it was offered. The crew died due to late arrival of rescue team [including the UK and Norway] with the result that Putin's popularity took a downturn.

Putin's popularity again suffered when the Government was unable

to effectively meet threats posed by Chechen rebels to Russia's internal security. On October 23, 2002, Chechen militants seized the crowded Dubrovka theatre in Moscow and held over 900 hostages. They demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya. Failing which, they threatened to blow up the theatre and kill all the hostages. After three days of hesitation, the Russian government dispatched commandos to rescue the hostages from their captors. The armed commandos stormed the theatre and used sleeping gas. About 130 hostages and 40 Chechen rebels died, most due to suffocation, and the government came in for severe criticism.

The theatre incident enraged the President to such an extent that he vowed to take revenge. The Russian army began to strike at all the strong holds of the Chechen rebels. In the meantime, the Chechen rebels killed their newly elected pro-Russian President Akhmad Kadyrov in May 2004. In the month of August the rebels destroyed two Russian aircrafts. Then followed what is known as Beslan School Hostage crisis (September 1, 2004-September 3, 2004). In this incident, Chechen rebels seized the school and took over 1000 hostages, including school children and their parents and teachers. On the third day of the crisis, Russian security forces entered the school building and freed the hostages after killing the rebels. The incident resulted in the death of about 330 hostages, most of them children.

The process of liberalization and privatization of Russian economy began when some of the state enterprises were sold to private entrepreneurs. However, some of the state enterprises were acquired illegally by some Russian business tycoons. Putin intervened and forced these unscrupulous tycoons to return the state property. Two of them, namely, Gusinsky and Berezovsky were forced to give up a part of their assets and leave Russia. In the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, he not only surrendered his famous oil company Yukos to the state, but also suffered imprisonment. Putin extended state control over a few TV channels and the print media. After reelection to the Presidency (March 2004), Putin interfered in Ukrainian and Byelorussian elections to extend Russian control over these two provinces. His action was severely criticized in the west. The Russian government sponsored a so-called economic reform called Monetization. But it became very unpopular.

Russia backed Serbia in suppressing the Kosovars (a majority of them were Muslim-Albanians) because they demanded independence. The demand for independence by the Kosovars was supported by western nations. Finally, Russia compromised on this issue and supported the west in its war against Serbia. Russia also launched a war against Georgia when the latter tried to take over the breakaway South Ossetia. The war came to an end when EU and UN intervened. In the end, Russia unilaterally recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In spite of west's criticism of Vladimir Putin, his popularity remained high with the common Russians. This was because he showed signs of great leadership in Russia's post-Cold War era.

Putin extended his hands of friendship with the west and allowed the former communist states to join the EU. However, he opposed their joining the NATO alliance during the years 1997-2004. He was angry when the NATO members attacked Yugoslavia [1999], *i.e.* war against Kosovo. Putin finally gave his consent to the continuation of the war and join the NATO peace keeping forces for bringing about a political settlement in the Balkans. The US and Russian presidents maintain cordial relationship even though Russia opposed America's war against Iraq.

Russia strengthened it's ties with Belarus by forming the union with that state in April 1997. Russia also signed friendship treaty with the People's Republic of China and agreed to lay the Trans-Siberian oil-pipeline to supply the energy needs of China.

In 2008, elections took place for the post of Russian Presidency. Putin's nominee Mr. Dmitry Medvedev was elected President. The latter appointed Putin as the Prime Minister. In other words, Putin continued to exercise his control over Russia 'through back seat driving.' In March 2012, Putin was reelected as President of Russia for an extended term of six years, with Medvedev now as his Prime Minister in a reversal of roles.

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